FOOTSTEPS OF SCOTT

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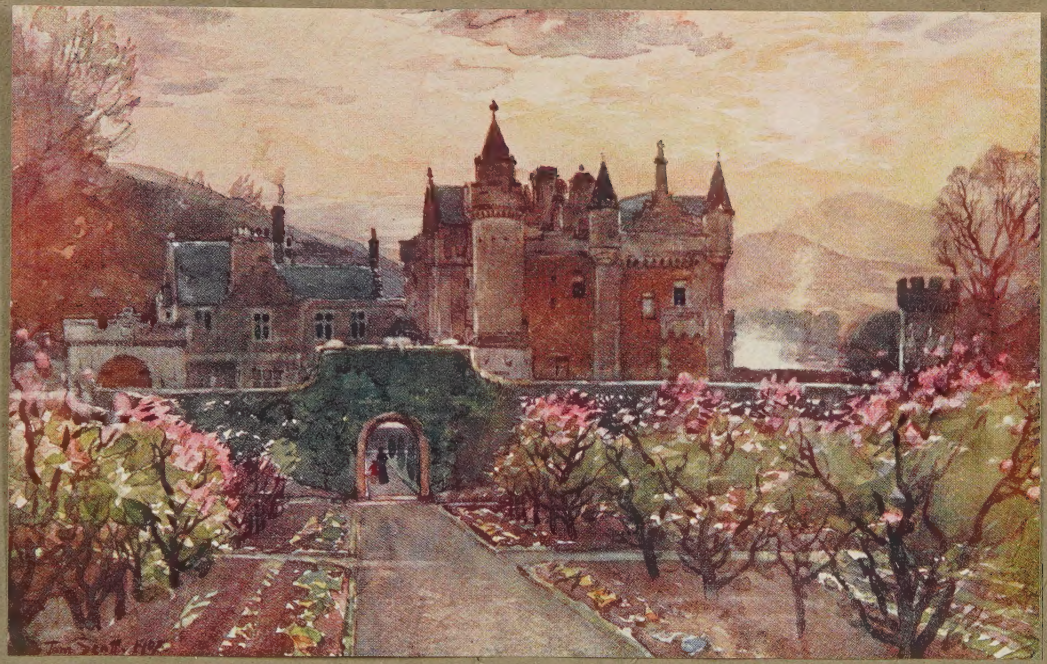
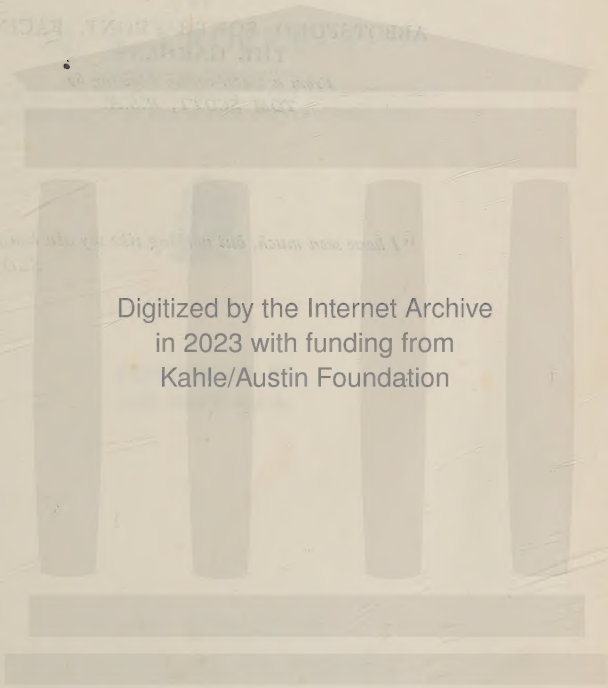
FOOTSTEPS OF SCOTT

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd . . ."

SCOTT.





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ABBOTSFORD, SOUTH FRONT, FACING THE GARDENS

From a water-colour drawing by TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"I have seen much, but nothing like my ain house."
SCOTT.

FOOTSTEPS OF SCOTT

BY

W. S. CROCKETT

MINISTER OF TWEEDSMUIR;
AUTHOR OF "IN PRAISE OF TWEED," "THE SCOTT COUNTRY," "ABBOTSFORD," "IN THE BORDER COUNTRY," ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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1909

TO

THE MEMORY

OF

MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THE chapters that follow are biographical and topographical. There is no need for a new Life of Scott; and the present little volume makes no claim to be regarded as such. It is written chiefly for those who desire to have recorded, within brief space, the salient features respecting Sir Walter and his Land. Some fresh facts will be found here and there.

The proofs have been read by my friend Mr Cuthbert Hadden.

W. S. CROCKETT.

THE MANSE,
TWEEDSMUIR,
October 1907.

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FOOTSTEPS OF SCOTT

CHAPTER I

WALTER SCOTT'S LAND

To any reader of the Romances, Walter Scott's Land cannot be restricted to that comparatively small stretch of country bounded on one side by the Liberties of Berwick, on the other by the Solway Moss, and known to history as the Scottish Border. That would be a clearly impossible limit. As we shall see, however, it has a perfectly legitimate claim to be called "the Scott Country," and to be so regarded in the popular interpretation of the phrase. For in one crowning sense it is Sir Walter's Land—the land of his nativity; the land consecrated by his life, his herculean labours, his joys, and his sorrows.

At its widest, nevertheless, Walter Scott's

Land must obviously extend far away beyond the Tweed and the Border Marches—far from the country which gave him birth. What region has not been touched by his wizard spell? If we make his writings—the sphere of his imagination—the gauge of area, we shall have a singularly vast field to traverse. Not so easy, then, to define what is meant by Walter Scott's Land! Take the Scottish romances alone, and the whole of North Britain is embraced in the term. From that "wild hyperborean isle," sacred to Norna of the Fitful Head, sacred to Minna and Brenda, those ever-winsome maidens of *The Pirate*, down to the arena of *Redgauntlet* and *Guy Mannering* by the Solway Firth, there is hardly a tract of Scotland but owes something to the genius of the greatest of the Scots. From Benbecula among "the wind-swept Hebrides" to St Abb's in the east, one can never miss the *glamourie* of a land of which it has been said that the poet has sung, and the romancist has wandered, as of old the "shenach-

ies," or Gaelic story-tellers, wandered—love in their hearts, a light in their eyes, an old tale on their lips.

But if the range of genius is to delimit the Country of Sir Walter, not all the inspiration of "his own, his native land" were sufficient for such a Master. True to the old moss-trooping traditions, we should find ourselves making sundry "raids" across the Border: into the central England of *Ivanhoe*, for instance; into the Warwickshire of *Kenilworth*—the richest of all the English counties in literary association; into the Derbyshire of *Peveril of the Peak*; into the Oxfordshire of *Woodstock*, and the fascinating London of *The Fortunes of Nigel*. Nor would one omit the Welsh Borderland of *The Betrothed*, or the Isle of Man, where Julian Peveril "opened out his whole heart" to the beautiful Alice Bridgenorth. Neither, from the standpoint of our author's productiveness, does this terminate the scope of his Country. Scott's genius was of too keen and imagin-

ative a nature to be confined to the coasts of his native Britain. He must needs sail the seas and wander in sunnier climes, adventurous-wise, with *Quentin Durward* in fair Provence and Aix, the old troubadour capital; with the knights of *The Talisman* in Syria and the Holy Land; with pretty Menie Gray, the heroine of *The Surgeon's Daughter*, in far-away Mysore; with *Anne of Geierstein* in Switzerland and the Rhine; with *Don Roderick* in Spain; with *Count Robert of Paris* in Constantinople. Italy, that rich land of romance, Sir Walter left practically untouched, save for the never-to-be-published *Il Bizarro*, a product of his dying pen, written at Naples. It is curious, too, that Ireland has so small a place in the work of one who, as he tells us, drew his early inspiration as a writer of fiction from Miss Edgeworth, the novelist of *Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee*. Nor, if we except Major Bridgenorth's reminiscences of New England life, in *Peveril of the Peak*, does America seem to have made any ap-

peal to Scott; though it can scarcely be forgotten that several of his lifelong friends were Americans. At its widest, therefore (not to further labour the point), Walter Scott's Land will carry us from the Stone of Hoy to the Golden Horn,—from the "glittering and resolute streams of Tweed" to the brown and turbid waters of the Jordan, comprising, in part at least, the older Continents of Europe and Asia.

But the true Scott-Land has naturally a more restricted area. The former is too large a space for the homage of the heart. There must be a more personal definition —one which can be grasped with a conscious affection. What is peculiarly the Country of Sir Walter must be taken to be that where the greater part of his outward and actual as well as his imaginative life was passed, the region which lay closest to his heart and memory; which he knew best and loved most; where life's truest joys first came to him; the scene of his marvellous successes and of his overwhel-

ming reverses; the country where, single-handed, braver fight was never fought, and where, like the dead Douglas, fallen, but not worsted, he sleeps well after the long, hard day. *That* must always be Walter Scott's Land as it touches the human heart.

We have already spoken of this region as that which comes under the designation of the Scottish Border, comprising, to put it simply, the romantic valley of the Tweed and its tributaries. This, at all events, is claimed as the Border district in its literary, and consequently in its Scott sense. But, for our present purpose, let us include Edinburgh and Lasswade also, and the mapping out of Walter Scott's Land, in the character in which we are to deal with it, will be complete. Here centre the chief Scott associations, twined round such names as Sandyknowe, Kelso, Ashestiel, Abbotsford, Yarrow, Melrose, Dryburgh, and many others.

What memories does the mere mention of them conjure up in the mind of every

lover of Sir Walter! These names were constantly upon his own lips; nor did the world contain more hallowed spots than they were to him all his life long.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE AND "THE MINSTRELSY"

WHAT has been called—and probably is—the greatest event in the history of Edinburgh—the birth of Walter Scott—took place a hundred and thirty-six years ago this summer of 1907. It is curious to think of one still living,[1] who for more than a quarter of a century was Scott's contemporary, who conversed with him, who can remember Abbotsford in the making, who heard the conflict of talk about *Waverley*, and who saw Scott's funeral. Of recent links with Scott which the newspapers have been chronicling from time to time, this is certainly the most remarkable. For

[1] James Bell, Galashiels—a native of Earlston, b. 1804. At the moment of writing the death is announced of the last survivor—George Croal, Edinburgh—of those who were present at the famous Theatrical Fund Dinner in 1827, when Scott avowed himself "the total and undivided author" of the Waverley Novels. Mr Croal was born in 1811.

no other now living can recall the original Abbotsford — before the place passed into Scott's hands, as far back as 1811— when our centenarian was a boy of seven. It would be interesting and instructive to have the collected reminiscences of persons alive at the beginning of the twentieth century who had seen Scott, or better still, who had spoken to him. Such memories must soon be extinct altogether.

One hardly needs to ask what were Scott's feelings towards Edinburgh. It was his "own romantic town," the "pearl of cities." Its long proud history lay at his fingers' ends, he said. The glamour of its quaint streets, haunted by the ghosts of centuries, and its "solemn but seductive beauty," continued with him from youth to age, strangely heightened during his last illness, when he was constantly recalling sights and scenes in the High Street and Canongate, every ancient building of which none knew so well as he. There is no better word-picture of Edinburgh (a

Turner in verse) than that of *Marmion*, canto iv.—the description of the Blackford Hill panorama, most dear to Scott—dear to Edinburgh lovers everywhere:—

> "Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
> For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed. . . .
> The wandering eye could o'er it go,
> And mark the distant city glow
> With gloomy splendour red;
> For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
> That round her sable turrets flow,
> The morning beams were shed,
> And tinged them with a lustre proud,
> Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
> Such dusky grandeur clothed the height
> Where the huge Castle holds its state,
> And all the steep slope down,
> Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
> Piled deep and massy, close and high,
> Mine own romantic town!"

All through, in the Waverleys and verse-romances, there are many kindly allusions to the city of his dreams and desires. In the sense of being proprietor, Scott was an Edinburgh citizen for all but thirty years, and from the publication of *Waverley* he was the city's most notable figure. As he walked

Edinburgh's streets, which he was fond of doing, limping his way home from the Parliament House to "dear 39" Castle Street (the city's truest memorial, notwithstanding Kemp's masterpiece), many a head must have turned to look at him, to admire his otherwise robust and manly form. Many a whisper to child or stranger must have followed him, "See, that is Sir Walter Scott!" Many there must have been to remember and tell long afterwards how they had seen the "Author of *Waverley*" at his best. Scott moved with absolute freedom up the High Street, and down the Mound, or along Princes Street, pausing at the bookshops, or the Clubs, or at the houses of his friends. He was naturally one of the "sights" of the Capital, but never was he molested, nor did anything occur to mar the good feeling which knit him to the mass of his fellow-citizens. For Edinburgh had long taken Scott to its heart, and his own unbounded affection for the place of his birth, where practically the

whole of his active life was spent, is a world's possession. It was from Edinburgh that he drew much of the inspiration of *Waverley* and its compeers. Whilst furnishing him with no end of romantic material, the city itself and its surroundings became the arena of scenes the most unforgettable in Scottish fiction. At Edinburgh, Scott lived (humbly) in the glow of a literary success that has never been equalled. And here, too, had he experience of the cloudy and dark day. Does any one marvel that the "grey metropolis of the North" cherishes, as it does, the name of its "chiefest scribe and recorder"? For was he not, and is he not, out of all sight, the noblest of its sons, the most chivalrous Scot of them all? To speak of Edinburgh as "Sir Walter's Town" is to confer a higher honour than all its kings, or states men, or wise men of the past have been able to bestow upon it. For, all the world over, how do the magic memories of Edinburgh and of Scott go wandering hand in hand!

MARRIAGE AND "THE MINSTRELSY"

Literally in the heart of the Old Town—under the shadow of St Giles', it may be said—Scott first saw the light. The Edinburgh of that epoch differed considerably from its modern queenly representative. It was still the old, romantic, mediæval city, having the High Street running up from Holyrood to the Castle for its principal thoroughfare—a street probably unmatched in Europe for the number and character of its historical associations. One of Scott's favourite haunts as boy and man, it is frequently sketched in the poems and novels. "How often have I seen him," says Lockhart, "go a long way round about rather than miss the opportunity of passing through some of the quaint windings of the ancient city. His coachman knew him too well to move at a Jehu's pace amidst such scenes. No funeral hearse crept more leisurely than did his landau up the Canongate, and not a queer, tottering gable but recalled to him some long-buried memory of splendour or of bloodshed." On a lower

level, and parallel to the High Street, runs the Cowgate, of which Alexander Alexius, Canon of St Andrews, writing in 1532, says that it contains "the palaces belonging to the princes of the realm, where there is nothing mean or rustic, but all magnificent," — a humiliating reflection on the present state of matters. Branching off the Cowgate were a number of smaller streets or alleys, one of which, from being the chief approach to the Town's College, was designated the College Wynd. What little is left of it has been rechristened Guthrie Street, from that prince of home-missionaries, Dr Thomas Guthrie, much of whose noble slum work was carried on in this locality. A plain four-storeyed house standing at the Wynd-head (to the east), and immediately facing the great gateway of the College, was the birthplace of Scott, who was born, it is stated, under the same roof as the celebrated Lord Henderland, and opposite the residence of Dr Joseph Black, the chemist. Oliver Goldsmith had

his lodging in the College Wynd when studying medicine at Edinburgh in 1752, and it was through this street that Boswell and Principal Robertson conducted Dr Johnson on his visit to the University, when Scott was a baby. It is many years since the last of the old College Wynd buildings disappeared, and all that remains to mark the site (as nearly as possible) of Scott's birth-house is a neat tablet in the wall of No. 8 Chambers Street (erected by the Town Council), and recording the fact that—

NEAR THIS
SPOT STOOD
THE HOUSE
IN WHICH
SIR
WALTER SCOTT
WAS BORN
15TH AUGUST
1771

The College Wynd seems to have been a somewhat unfortunate habitat for the Scott family; at least six (*seven* is Scott's

own statement) of its members had died in infancy, and the probability is that Scott himself would have succumbed had he remained in what was fast becoming an undesirable part of the city. The rate of infant mortality appears to have been abnormally high about this period, the real cause of the trouble being, it was believed, the close and damp character of the nurseries, which, in the lofty old mansions of the Canongate, the College Wynd, and other parts, were, as a rule, relegated to the sunk floors below the level of the street. And the era of fresh air and scientific drainage was not yet! The time was therefore ripe for a great change. So at Scott's birth Edinburgh was in the transition stage between the old and the new eras. On what is now Princes Street some building had been begun, and the North Bridge, which was to connect the two wings of the city, was finished in 1772. There were improvements in the Old Town also, George Square being built about this time. It was to

Brown's Square, part of which may still be seen at the top of Chambers Street, that, as we read in *Redgauntlet*, the Fairfords removed, Alan relating to his friend Darsie Latimer how "the leaving of his old apartments in the Luckenbooths was to him [Fairford senior] like divorcing the soul from the body." As a matter of fact, however, it was to George Square—to No. 25—that Saunders Fairford (Scott's father under a thin disguise) flitted a year or two following the birth of Scott, who was, by the way, the ninth child of the family and the second Walter, the first having died in 1766.

Meantime the infant of the College Wynd was like to go the way of his predecessors. He had barely reached his second year when a touch of the hereditary malady (paralysis) made its appearance. Among other things it was discovered that he had lost the use of his right leg, to recover which not all the skill of the College specialists was of avail. On their advice

it was agreed to send the child to the country, in the hope that the open air and the natural exertion of his limbs might effect a cure. He was taken accordingly to his grandfather's farm at Sandyknowe, near Smailholm, in Roxburghshire — the very spot for such as he. Here, after a year or two, to use his own words, "I, who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child—*non sine diis animosus infans.*"

But Sandyknowe did more than set him on his legs again. He was never quite cured of his lameness, to be sure. Like one of his ancestors, he was Walter the Lamiter for life, yet otherwise he was anything but lame. Carlyle's statement that "no sounder piece of British manhood was put together in that eighteenth century of Time" owes its possibility to the fortunate suggestion of Sandyknowe, which was the very making of him physically and ment-

ally. He was sent to Sandyknowe "to die," he said years afterwards. But for that dolesome anticipation we might not have had the living, full-blooded, full-brained Scott at all. There has been some useless talk about Scott's "unfortunate" lameness. Well, but for his lameness very likely we should have had Scott the soldier, fighting his way under Wellington in the Napoleonic Wars, instead of Scott the hardly less intrepid story-teller—surely the happier alternative of the two. It is to this lucky accident of the lameness that we owe *Marmion* and *Waverley*, just as Spain is indebted to the wound which disabled Cervantes for the conception of the immortal *Don Quixote*.

It was at Sandyknowe that Scott awoke to the first consciousness of existence—swathed in the skin of a newly-slain sheep, and crawling along the floor after a watch dangled by his kinsman, Sir George Makdougall of Makerstoun. All sorts of nostrums were suggested as a cure, but noth-

ing did him so much good as being carried out to the hillside and allowed the free scope of his limbs—to kick and roll as he liked on the green sward, with the wondering sheep and lambs nibbling beside him. He had the most faithful of attendants in auld Sandy Ormiston, the shepherd, or "cow-bailie," as Lockhart styles him—a veritable Tom Purdie of his boyhood, to whom the world owes more than it wots of. For was it not pretty much through the medium of this "aged hind" that the Muse of Poetry and Romance found Scott and claimed him for her own?

> "Here was poetic impulse given
> By the green hill and clear blue heaven."

Sandyknowe was truly "meet nurse for a poetic child," "a sweet-tempered bairn," "a darling with all about the house." An atmosphere of romance pervaded the place. How otherwise could it be with the proximity of so many spots famous in Border story, and not least the overshadowing presence of that stern old fortlet of Smail-

holm (or Sandyknowe), looking out, the long years through,

> "Over Tweed's fair flood and Mertoun's wood
> And all down Teviotdale"—

over the wide plain and the blue hills that had seen so many battles and Border frays? Let us remember also the happy fellowships of the farm-house—his grandparents, Robert Scott and Barbara Haliburton, and his "kind and affectionate Aunt Janet," all of whose share in the "making" of the future Minstrel can never be forgotten. It was Aunt Janet who taught him to "read brawly," to spout *Hardyknute* (not for the deaving of the parish minister, however), and to "spell" the lines of old Satchells' rhyming *True History of several Honourable Families of the Right Honourable Name of Scot*, one of the first books he ever attempted—in his fourth year no less. Never was there a clearer case of environment (and heredity) shaping a man's future. One hesitates to think how easily might any other surrounding have given us an altogether

different Scott, as he himself suggests! There is, at all events, no question that in Sandyknowe we have the *fons et origo* of the *Minstrelsy* and the best of the verse-romances. Scott's attachment to the place is seen in his letters and conversations, and in his frequent visits in after life, above all in the well-known lines in the Introduction to the third canto of *Marmion*—a record and an apologia which must be quoted, hackneyed though it is:—

"Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.

. . . . .

It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honey-suckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.

SANDYKNOWE TOWER

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"*Then rise those crags, that mountain tower*
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claim'd homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given
By the green hill and clear blue heaven."

SCOTT.

I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still with trump and clang
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glar'd through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away."

That Scott should catch the afflatus of the Border Country was in the fitness of things. The Border had been the home-

land of his ancestors for immemorial generations. There was scarcely one of its families with which he could not count kin, from Buccleuch himself to the "bauld Rutherfords," the Merse Swintons, the Haliburtons, the Makdougalls, and others. "There are few in Scotland under the titled nobility," says Lockhart, "who could trace their blood to so many stocks of historical distinction." Genealogically, Scott was the son of a grandson of the first Scott of Raeburn, who came from the third Scott of Harden, who came from a younger son of the Scotts of Sinton, who came from the Bold Buccleuch. His greatest pride was the Harden pedigree, which took him back to the indomitable Auld Wat, the most picturesque figure of Border balladry, and his fair dame, no less famous, the "Flower of Yarrow," names which, as he says, he "made to ring in many a ditty." When the last bullock driven from the English pastures was consumed, it was Mary Scott who set before the assembled guests a pair

of clean spurs as a broad hint that they must bestir themselves if they would eat. Midway between Auld Wat's day and his own, lived "Beardie," that dour, unbending Jacobite, whose enthusiasm for an ill-fated cause lost him his lands and won the cognomen by which posterity best remembers him, from the mad resolve never to cut his beard (like Dalziel of Binns) till the Stuarts were restored. He reminds us of the Highlander who, having shaken hands with Prince Charlie, exclaimed, "Whilst I live, this hand of mine will never touch water." It was Beardie's second son—Scott's grandfather—a "stickit" sailor, who blossomed into the Sandyknowe tacksman, and whose eldest son, Walter Scott, an Edinburgh Writer to the Signet, became the father of our Sir Walter. On his mother's side—a Rutherford—he had for great-grandfather the first minister of Yarrow after the Revolution; for grandfather, John Rutherford, Professor of the Practice of Medicine at Edinburgh; and

for mother, the clever and kindly, if not particularly comely, Anne Rutherford.

Though Sandyknowe stands for so much in the career of Scott, one fears that the place is too little regarded in these days of shrine-hunting. How many, for instance, can locate the scene of that delightful picture just quoted? The spot is off the beaten track, to be sure, but none too far, for Melrose is only seven miles away, Kelso six, and Earlston a like distance, and from all these towns driving facilities are plentiful. Sandyknowe, Scott's cradling-ground in the sphere of poetry, waits to be popularised, and we hope to see something done before long. Assuredly, one cannot be said to know the Scott-Land if the scenery of some of the best of the formative years be overlooked. For here Scott lived (a twelvemonth excepted) from his third to his eighth year, a period that means a great deal in the life of a boy, especially a boy of Scott's stamp. The original farm-house—the "thatched mansion"

of *Marmion*—has long since disappeared. Tradition points to its site (it was a mere cottage) at the north-east end of the modern steading, but nothing remains to show that the site had ever been occupied by a dwelling. The landscape is virtually the same, with a greater woodland profusion perhaps. Here is the lochan of *The Abbot*, crowned by the crags and the old grey peel (scene of the *Eve of St John*) which has withstood the assaults and storms of probably seven hundred years, and is still in tolerable preservation—is thought, indeed, to be the most perfect relic of a feudal building in the South of Scotland.

Visits to Bath "for the waters," and to Prestonpans "for sea-bathing," come within the Sandyknowe period. A relic of the Bath visit is the first extant portrait of Scott—the ivory miniature still to be seen in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, of which that at Abbotsford is a replica. It is interesting to note the characteristically tall forehead, the frank and eager air,

and the profile, "wonderfully like what it was to the last," says Lockhart. At Prestonpans he made the acquaintance of a veteran, the original of the deathless Dalgetty, and of George Constable, in part the prototype of Monkbarns in *The Antiquary*, "the first person who told me about Falstaff and Hotspur."

The Sandyknowe homestead was now broken up by the death of his grandfather, old Mrs Scott and her daughter removing to Kelso, to a house close by the Tweed and Kelso Bridge, known to-day as Waverley Lodge. He was now considered well enough to live with his father at George Square, which was his settled residence for the next nineteen years. Homer he read at home (in Pope's version) along with the Border ballads and Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen*, and on Sundays, "to relieve the gloom of one dull sermon succeeding on another," Bunyan's *Pilgrim* and Gessner's *Death of Abel*.[1] In October 1778 he entered

[1] It is worth noting that Salomon Gessner's (German pas-

the old Edinburgh High School (the old City Hospital). Luke Fraser was his first preceptor, and by and by he passed into the hands of the Rector, Dr Adam the Latinist. He speaks of himself as "glancing like a meteor from the bottom to the top of the form." But his verse translations (of Horace and Virgil) were picked out for praise, and Dr Adam called him "the historian of the class," showing that Scott during his schooldays was *not* the dunce of a popular misconception. And withal, he was "a bonnie fechter," daring the "kittle nine-steps" on the narrow ledge of the Castle Rock, helping to "man the Cowgate Port" in snowball fights, and taking part in the frequent "bickers" against the town boys, which he describes in the anecdote of Green-breeks. A turn of ill-health sent him to Kelso in 1783, where, at his aunt's, and at Rosebank, the home of a bachelor seafaring uncle, Captain Robert

toral poet) *Death of Abel* (Tod Abels), a kind of heroic prose poem, first published in 1758, was reprinted at *Kelso* in 1783

Scott, much of his boyhood was spent. We see the "making" of him at Kelso, "the most beautiful, if not the most romantic, village in Scotland." The meeting of two such rivers as Tweed and Teviot, both famous in song; the Abbey ruins; the remains of Roxburgh Castle; the palatial Floors Castle; and several other spots of note in the neighbourhood, are still Kelso's chief attractions. But it must be said that the beauty of the place has been vastly heightened since Scott's halcyon boyhood.

At the Kelso Grammar School (adjoining the Abbey, and long demolished) Scott learned more Latin; was usher to that paragon of Scots dominies, Lancelot Whale; met James and John Ballantyne, and became story-teller in embryo. From Kelso the first of the "raids" (to Norham, Flodden, Otterburn, etc.) must also be dated, as well as the inception of the *Minstrelsy*, following that historic perusal of Percy's *Reliques*, "when the summer day sped onward so fast that, notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thir-

KELSO ABBEY

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"To this period also I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighbourhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas. It presents objects, not only grand in themselves, but venerable from their association. The meeting of two superb rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, both renowned in song—the ruins of an ancient Abbey—the more distant vestiges of Roxburgh Castle—the modern mansion of Floors—are in themselves objects of the first class; yet are so mixed, united, and melted among a thousand other beauties of a less prominent description, that they harmonize into one general picture, and please rather by unison than by concord. . . . From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion."

SCOTT.

teen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was found still entranced in my intellectual banquet." In his thirteenth year Scott matriculated at the College of Edinburgh. At fifteen he was indentured to his father, and "entered upon the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances." At sixteen he saw the Highlands for the first time, and met Stuart of Invernahyle, who had measured swords with Rob Roy, and been "out" with Mar and with "Chairlie." It was about this time, too, that he had his memorable interview with Burns at Sciennes Hill House (still standing at Braid Place, Edinburgh). "I saw him one day," he writes, "at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters [young Adam Ferguson, his bosom friend, was the other] sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's

manner was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on the one side, on the other his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:—

"Cold on Canadian Hills, or Minden plain,
Perhaps ye Parent wept her Soldier Slain;
Bent o'er her Babe, her Eyes dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the Milk he drew.
Sad Mournfull presage of his future years
The Child of Misery Baptized in tears."[1]

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that

[1] This identical print—a little brown daub entitled "Affliction"—is now to be seen in the Museum of the Chambers Institution at Peebles. Sir Adam Ferguson presented it to Robert Chambers, on whose death it passed to his brother William, and was in turn bequeathed by him to the Institute which he founded in his native town. The lines quoted above are exactly as they stand on the picture. It will be seen that they vary slightly from the version given in every biography of Scott. John Langhorne, curiously, wrote his poem *The Country Justice* at the request of a Richard *Burn*. Bunbury's print, published by W. Dickinson, London, bears the date 1783, and the name Langhorne, oddly enough, appears—though in smaller type—as the author of the stanza.

nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of the Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure."

It is stated that the "word" which Scott suppressed was, "You'll be a man yet, sir!"

They never met again, though, casually, Scott saw Burns examining a bookstall in Parliament Square. And, according to Constable, who spent an evening with Burns in 1792, the bard told him how he "had been struck with the wonderful powers of young Scott, and prognosticated his future greatness."

On the 11th of July 1792 (before he had completed his twenty-first year), along with his friend Will Clerk, he was—not creditless—called to the Bar, or, more technically,

admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates.

At nineteen Scott was in love. Scott's love-making belongs unquestionably to the most romantic period of his life. We cannot, however, stay to discuss the pros and cons of the affair. Suffice it to say that for at least six years he courted (somewhat bashfully) Miss Williamina (not Margaret, as Lockhart has it in the abridged Life) Belsches, with every good prospect, as he imagined, until suddenly his proposals were rejected. The lady soon afterwards married William Forbes, Younger of Pitsligo.[1] The secret of her strangely capricious treatment of Scott has never been revealed. There is no

[1] Miss Belsches (b. Oct. 1776) was the only child of Sir John Wishart Belsches (afterwards, by Royal licence, Stuart), Bart., of Fettercairn, by his marriage with Lady Jane Leslie, eldest daughter of the sixth Earl of Leven and Melville. Sir William Stuart Forbes, Bart., of Pitsligo and Fettercairn, was the son of Sir William, the celebrated Scottish banker, and biographer of Beattie the Minstrel. John Hay Forbes, Lord Medwyn, was his brother, and his sister was the wife of Scott's lifelong friend, James Skene of Rubislaw. Principal James David Forbes, the physicist, was the youngest son of Sir William and Lady (Williamina) Forbes. The latter died in 1810.

doubt that Scott was madly in love, and that scarcely any blow so staggered him. He felt it practically all his life, and many passages in the poems and novels were most surely inspired by the haunting remembrance of this his first love. In *Rokeby*, for instance, Matilda, the heroine of the poem, is a vivid description of the person of his beloved. The parting of Frank Osbaldistone and Di Vernon near the Fords of Frew, and the opening words of the twelfth chapter of *Peveril*, are equally applicable to the pair and the circumstances. Indeed, as Keble points out, it was his "early love's image haunting Scott all his life long that was the true well-spring of inspiration in all his minstrelsy and romance."

But, spite of all, his heart, as he tells us, was "handsomely pieced again" though the "crack" remained. It was on Christmas Eve of 1797, within St Mary's Church at Carlisle, now merged in the Cathedral, that he led to the altar Miss Margaret Charlotte Charpentier. Miss Carpenter (as the name was

Anglicised) was of French extraction, the daughter of Jean Charpentier, a royalist of Lyons, *Ecuyer du Roi*, and of Charlotte Volere, who was connected with one of the old houses. Scott's description of his bride —"a brunette as dark as a blackberry, but her person and face very engaging"—compares well with the miniature at Abbotsford, painted shortly before marriage. "A lovelier vision, as all who remember her in the bloom of her days have assured me, could hardly have been imagined," sums up Lockhart's account of her. Scott met her at Gilsland, a popular Cumberland Spa. The Gilslanders still point out the "Popping-Stone" where the fateful question was put, and the "Kissing-Thorn" beneath whose branches the compact was sealed, after a courtship not exceeding in months the number of years of his previous venture.

Long honeymoons were unknown in Scott's time, and on the day following his marriage he brought his bride by coach to

Edinburgh, first to lodgings at 108 George Street, from which they afterwards removed to 10 South Castle Street, and next to 39 North Castle Street, the most famous of all the Edinburgh houses occupied by Sir Walter.[1] Here he lived till 1826, the dark year of his life, which witnessed the death of Lady Scott and the almost paralysing failure of his financial affairs. They had a summer house also, at Lasswade, seven miles south-east of the city, by "Eske's fair streams that run," where six of the happiest seasons of their married life were spent. The house, called Lasswade Cottage, is en-

[1] 39 Castle Street, occupied by a firm of lawyers, is practically unchanged since Scott's time. The room in which he wrote (the "den"), and at the window of which Lockhart had the vision of "the hand," is absolutely unchanged, except, of course, for its furnishings. So, too, is the dining-room. The bedrooms are turned into offices, and the stone stairs are not without their own memories. Some alterations on the neighbouring buildings have spoiled the view both back and front, but otherwise the house is exactly as it was. Some interesting letters of Scott with reference to the property are in possession of the present owner. At 39 most of the Waverleys were written and much of Scott's best work done. It is thus, as has already been said, Scott's truest Edinburgh memorial.

larged somewhat, but retains its old circular-looking appearance and curious conical thatched roof, which, but for its association with Scott, might long ago have been supplanted by one of slate.

Lasswade's surroundings made a very happy appeal to the heart of Scott. It is probably the "Gandercleuch" referred to in the preface of the *Tales of my Landlord.* In an arched aisle of the parish church repose the remains of the poet Drummond of Hawthornden, "the Scottish Petrarch," to whom a memorial was erected in 1893.

"Here Damon lies, whose songs did sometime grace
The murmuring Esk—may roses shade the place!"

The Esk flows near. "Classic Hawthornden" itself is at hand, where in the winter of 1618–19 Drummond entertained Ben Jonson, who came on foot all the way from London to see him. Roslin Castle (a ruin) and Chapel, an "unfinished thought in stone" (still a place of worship, the supposed Engaddi of *The Talisman*), are in the neigh-

bourhood, the latter containing the exquisitely sculptured Prentice Pillar (probably Prince's), around which has grown the well-known myth of the apprentice being a better man than his master.

But the true interest of Lasswade as a bit of the Scott Land lies in the fact that here Scott commenced the craft of authorship, excepting, of course, his Bürger translations, *The Chase*, and *William and Helen*, published in 1796—a complete failure. Early in 1799 he published a translation of Goethe's tragedy, *Goetz of Berlichingen With the Iron Hand*, and composed some original ballads, mostly in imitation of the ancient Scottish measure, such as the *Eve of St John* (a Sandyknowe legend—really Irish, however), with *Glenfinlas*, and *The Gray Brother*, in the latter of which we get a beautiful little picture of Lasswade and its surroundings:—

"Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet!
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, through copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun.

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray;

From that fair dome, where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free,
To Auchendinny's hazel glade
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove
And Roslin's rocky glen,
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden?"

The "fair dome" was Penicuik House, the home of Scott's bosom friend, Will Clerk. At Auchendinny lived Henry Mackenzie, "the Man of Feeling," the doyen of Scottish literature, to whom Scott dedicated *Waverley*. Woodhouselee, a seat of the Fraser-Tytlers, was the reputed haunt of a lady in white with a child in her arms—the ghost of Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh's wife and her new-born babe, both of whom perished in consequence of being driven out of doors on a winter night under instructions from the Regent Moray. Hamilton's revenge on

Moray forms the theme of Scott's fine ballad, *Cadyow Castle.* Near Lasswade are Melville Castle, the baronial pile of the statesman Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville, to whom Scott owed so much, and Dalkeith House, the seat of his chieftain, the Duke of Buccleuch.

But the *Minstrelsy* was the work by which Scott first leapt into fame. No book, he says, afforded so much pleasure in its composition, nor can it be doubted that in making it, Scott was virtually making himself as a writer and romancist. He was a balladist from his boyhood. Only for his being "ordered South" to Sandyknowe and the Border—one of the supremely fortunate accidents of history—we may not have had the *Minstrelsy*, or the more magnificent succession of Waverley. Practically all his future (as has already been hinted) lay in the wake of that early environment. The peat-fires and the summer hills of Sandyknowe were the two factors which combined to give us Walter Scott as we

best know him. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the *Minstrelsy* was Scott's day-dream as a boy. He may not have expressed himself in so many words, but the fascination held him and haunted him all through the years of youth, and there is ample evidence of an ambition to link his name with the legendary lore of the country as emphatically as Bishop Percy and other delvers in the same field. Soon after being called to the Bar, he began the work of collecting and collating the various ballad versions which crossed his path. In company with Robert Shortreed, most genial of Sheriff-Substitutes (of Roxburghshire), he made an annual holiday, or "raid," as he loved to call it, into one of the lonesomest, and at that time most inaccessible, districts of the Border. Liddesdale, the southernmost half of Roxburghshire, was practically an unknown land—"like some unkenned-of isle ayont New Holland," as in some respects it still is, for the more central parts of the Border at

least. Saturated with old-world memories, the last haunt of the balladists, a peel crumbling in every glen, it was Scott's happy hunting-ground for no fewer than seven seasons in succession. He probably never enjoyed himself as much in his life as during those expeditions. Lockhart certainly thinks so, and humorously details some of the travellers' experiences as they passed "from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead, gathering wherever they went songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity." Shortreed's words, years afterwards, are perhaps more expressive: "Eh me! sic an endless fund o' humour and drollery as he then had wi' him. Never ten yards but we were either laughing, or roaring, or singing. Wherever we stopped, how bravely he suited himsel' to everybody! He aye did as the lave did; never made himsel' the great man, or took ony airs [put on airs] in

the company. I've seen him in a' moods on these jaunts, grave and gay, daft and serious, sober and drunk—this, however, even in our wildest rambles, was but rare—but, drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman." Nor must we forget the golden days among the Yarrow and Ettrick uplands—the true Ballad Country of the Borders which yielded so much excellent fruit. Three names dear to every Scott-lover, and to every Borderer, and no less dear for their own sakes, appear on the scene at this juncture—William Laidlaw, James Hogg, and John Leyden. The first of these, the "dear Willie" of the Abbotsford days, Scott's friend, afterwards his amanuensis, is one of the most lovable characters in literary biography. Laidlaw was born at Blackhouse in the enchanted Vale of Yarrow, and to Blackhouse came Scott on one of his ballad-hunting excursions. Laidlaw told him about James Hogg, over at Ettrick—a poet, and an enthusiast on the subject—whom Scott at once resolved to see. The date of

YARROW

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way."

SCOTT.

Scott coadjutors was John Leyden, the Orientalist, and author of *Scenes of Infancy*. Leyden, a shepherd's son, was born at Denholm, in Teviotdale, in 1775. When a student at Edinburgh he made an acquaintance with Scott, which ripened into the warmest friendship. Scott was never better helped than by Leyden, and the *Minstrelsy* contains several striking ballads from Leyden's own pen—*Lord Soulis*; *The Cout of Keeldar*; and *The Mermaid*.

At length, in January 1802, the work was issued and met with a hearty reception. The first edition consisted of 800 copies, of which 50 were on large paper. On the half-profit system, Scott shared to the extent of about £80, a sum which could never have repaid him for the actual disbursements incurred in collecting his materials. Within less than a year all the copies were disposed of, and a new edition, with a third volume, printed at Edinburgh, appeared in April 1803. The Longmans secured the copyright of the *Minstrelsy* for £500, and print-

ed, up to 1820, half a dozen editions. Since then it has been chiefly incorporated in the collections of the "Poetical Works," to the extent of at least 15,000 more in Lockhart's time; now it must be near five times that figure.

Whilst preserving in imperishable ink the best of the hitherto unpublished ballads of the Border, this also must be said for the *Minstrelsy*, that it was the germ out of which grew the stately succession of *Waverley* itself. It was the seed-plant of every one of Scott's romances. Minus the *Minstrelsy*, we might have been minus *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering* and *Old Mortality* and *Redgauntlet* themselves. For a course of Scott, one cannot do better than begin with the *Minstrelsy*. Certainly Scott cannot be said to be read if the *Minstrelsy* be a shut book. There is so much in it that one would not like to lose—so much that throws a flood of light on the character and the later work of its compiler. "No person who has not gone through its volumes," says

Lockhart, "for the express purpose of comparing their contents with his great original works, can have formed a conception of the endless variety of incidents and images now expanded and emblazoned by his mature art, of which the first hints may be found either in the text of those primitive ballads, or in the notes which the happy rambles of his youth had gathered together for their illustration." When *Waverley* was a new book, and all the world was puzzling over the problem of its authorship, John Wilson is reported to have exclaimed, with characteristic impatience: "I wonder what all those people are perplexing themselves about? Have they forgotten the *prose* of the *Minstrelsy*?"

May we glance for a moment at the after-career of the three whose names have just been mentioned—Laidlaw, Hogg, and Leyden? Laidlaw farmed for a time Traquair Knowe, in Traquair parish, where he wrote that touching lyric, ranking next to the *Flowers of the Forest* for its pathos—*Lucy's*

Flittin—the scene of which is laid at that paradise of the Borders—The Glen. But Laidlaw, like Hogg, was unsuccessful as a farmer. Later in life he became Scott's steward at Abbotsford. He wrote for the magazines, and did a fair amount of literary work, and it is an open secret that to many of his suggestions Scott was indebted for improvements in the novels. Almost the whole of *The Bride of Lammermoor* was dictated to Laidlaw during the crisis of 1817. With the black year, 1826, Laidlaw quitted Scott's service, but returned in 1830. When the tragedy ended, he migrated north to Ross-shire, and was factor on the estate of Balnagowan. His health failing, he went to reside with his brother, a sheep-farmer at Contin, near Dingwall, where he died in 1845.

James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, had a somewhat chequered career, both as shepherd and as flockmaster himself. After occupying several situations in Edinburgh and elsewhere, he settled finally in the Yar-

row valley, at Altrive (now Eldinhope), taking a lease also of Mount Benger (now extinct), on the north side of the river, opposite Altrive. But Hogg was not made for farming, and both attempts turned out failures. His most successful ventures were his marriage to Margaret Phillips, and the writing of the *Queen's Wake*, especially *Kilmeny*, and several songs that must live so long as the Scottish tongue is spoken, such as, *When the Kye Comes Hame*; *Cam' ye by Athol*; *Flora Macdonald's Lament*; *Come o'er the Stream, Charlie*; *Lock the Door, Lariston.* Nor can we forget his *Skylark*, or his *Brownie of Bodsbeck* and *Shepherd's Calendar*, two of the best Border classics. His *Suicide's Grave* also is a powerful fragment, whose authorship has sometimes been attributed to Lockhart, but on inadequate evidence. It was at the Gordon Arms in Yarrowdale that Hogg and Scott met for the last time in 1832. Hogg died at Altrive three years later, and was buried among his shepherd ancestors in the green heart

of Ettrick, within a stone's-throw of his birth-spot.

John Leyden became a preacher of the Church of Scotland, but failed to obtain a parish—unfortunately for the Church and for the cause of learning. He afterwards studied medicine and took his degree of M.D. at St Andrews. In 1803 he sailed for India, rising in turn to a Professorship of Oriental Languages, and to a Judgeship, besides being Assay-Master of the Calcutta Mint. In 1811 he accompanied Lord Minto, then Governor-General, as interpreter, in the expedition against Java, and to investigate the language and literature of the tribes inhabiting the island. When near the seaport city of Batavia, as a result of his over-eagerness to explore an unventilated library containing many valuable manuscripts, his brilliant and laborious career was sadly and suddenly terminated (from fever) whilst he was yet in his thirty-sixth year. Three days earlier—28th August—Scott had written him a long letter relative

to the purchase of Abbotsford, which was returned unopened. A *Memoir* from Scott's pen was published in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for the same year, and it is said that he could never speak of his friend "without his lip quivering and his eye moistening." In chapter xxi. of *St Ronan's Well*, Mr Cargill likens Leyden to "a lamp too early quenched"; a comparison which recalls the lines from *The Lord of the Isles*:

> "His bright and brief career is o'er,
> And mute his tuneful strains.
> Quenched is his lamp of varied lore
> That loved the light of song to pour;
> A distant and a deadly shore
> Has Leyden's cold remains."

[Since the proofs of this book were corrected, Mr Bell, the veteran referred to at page 8, has passed away.]

CHAPTER III

ASHESTIEL AND THE VERSE ROMANCES

At the uncommonly early age of twenty-eight Scott was installed Sheriff of Selkirkshire—"the Shirra." He was indebted to the Duke of Buccleuch for the post, and there is little doubt as to his fitness for it. A failure at the Bar, he was, notwithstanding, an exceedingly able lawyer, "a profound jurist" indeed, according to those who knew him best; impartial, with a wonderful stock of that most invaluable asset, common sense. That even a judgeship would have been safe in his hands is hardly to be doubted. He did make some effort towards being appointed one of the Barons of Exchequer, as certain of the Scottish judges, in imitation of an English fashion, were then called, but the attempt—fortunately or unfortunately—came to nothing. The

fact shows, however, what he thought of his own fitness, and Scott never rated himself too high. He wrote on Judicial Reform; the legal allusions of the Waverleys; and his other offices, Clerk of Session, and Secretary to the Commission on Scottish Jurisprudence, are all corroborative of the claim set forth on his behalf to be a competent lawyer. He was thus thoroughly at home in the new rôle of Sheriff, which he held and adorned for the next thirty-two years. How well he performed his duties is evident from the inscription on the Selkirk statue, which stands immediately in front of the old County Court-house in the High Street:—

ERECTED IN AUGUST 1839
IN PROUD AND AFFECTIONATE
REMEMBRANCE OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BARONET,
SHERIFF OF THIS COUNTY FROM 1800 TO 1832.

Like the Outlaw Murray, he was Sheriff of Ettrick Forest, the designation he preferred, linking himself to the balladists

and all the romance of the most romantic Sheriffdom in Scotland.

He was not at home in another sense, however, as he might have found to his cost, had he persisted in disregarding the regulation which obliges a Sheriff to reside for at least four months in the year within his jurisdiction. Scott did not comply with this requirement for about five years after his appointment, much to the annoyance (unnecessary) of Lord Napier, the Lord-Lieutenant, who sternly reminded him of his dereliction. That Scott did not take the rebuke at all well is clear. He considered it merely an insistence on an empty form. That, indeed, it was in some ways; for not one of his shrieval duties had been neglected, and the like condition was not enforced in the case of many of his brother Sheriffs. Technically, of course, Scott was in the wrong, a fact which he must have come to realise, for he immediately took steps to amend matters. The relinquishing of his "sweet little cottage" on the Esk was a keen

disappointment, but there was no help for it. It is interesting to hear of Harden and Newark in the running as possible residences, though judged both unsuitable. Then Ashestiel cropped up and was fixed upon, the circumstances at the moment pointing to it as offering the best solution of the house difficulty. As the abode of his relatives—the Russells—the place was not unknown to Scott. Colonel William Russell, the husband of his maternal aunt, Jean Rutherford, had just died (1804), when Ashestiel passed to Russell's son James (afterwards General Sir James), a soldier of distinction in the East India Company's service. With his cousin's trustees Scott bargained for a lease, and we find him in occupation soon afterwards.

The Ashestiel tenancy—from 1804 to 1812—must be reckoned far and away the happiest period of Scott's career. Here certainly we see him at his best from the standpoint of human enjoyment, for never was he so absolutely at rest again. How one

loves to remember him at this point of his history, in those glorious halcyon days, ere yet the Abbotsford dream had roused him, before he had plunged into the vortex of commercial speculation, or had begun to suffer from the inconvenient attentions of the lion-hunters! Happy in his wife, in his family, in his friendships, in his health; possessed of a competence, immune from the real worries of life; with a learned leisure which later years never gave him, with long evenings free for the cultivation of the literary habit, his life here was a truly ideal one.

Of the place itself, Lockhart says that a more beautiful situation as the home of a poet could not be conceived. And it is the poetic that constitutes Ashestiel's chief attraction. It was during Scott's stay here that his fame as a poet was established; hence to students of the poems the house possesses an interest which is not shared by any of his other residences. With the stately Tweed flowing close by, and the "classic

Yarrow," "*fabulosus* as was ever Hydaspes," a few miles off across the "wild, unbounded hills" which are the overshadowing presence in every direction, Ashestiel, more than Sandyknowe, more than Abbotsford, was "meet nurse for a poetic child." Since Scott's day the picturesqueness of the spot, whose autumn shades are so winsomely painted in the introduction to canto i. of *Marmion*, has greatly increased, as has indeed all the beauty of that majestic sweep of the Tweed valley between Elibank and Ettrickfoot. Ashestiel remains in possession of the family from whom Scott had it, but there is little left to remind us of his occupancy—a portrait, a punch-bowl, and the invalid chair used in the last days at Abbotsford, being about all.

The house has changed somewhat, though not so "sorrowfully" as Ruskin would have us suppose. An east wing has been added, and the entrance, which was turned Tweedwards, now faces the Yarrow heights. The site was chosen, no doubt, for defensible-

ness, a piece of the original peel being observable in the present odd, three-cornered edifice. Scott wrote in what was the family dining-room—the library now—a quaint old-fashioned apartment with one window, on the east side of the entrance porch. Through one of the original windows (converted into presses, by the fireplace) the greyhounds, Douglas and Percy, referred to in *Marmion* as "cumbering our parlour's narrow floor," leapt out and in at pleasure. The garden, described by Lockhart, with its "holly hedges and broad green terraced walks," is little altered; and the deep ravine to the east, through which a mountain rivulet "more heard than seen" "hurries its waters to the Tweed," is still true to the *Marmion* picture:—

"Late, gazing down the steepy linn
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:

Now murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with double speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed."

In Scott's time there was no bridge across the Tweed (the present structure dates from 1848), and access to the house was only to be gained by a rather perilous ford, of which many humorous and exciting anecdotes are recorded. Scott had an amazing fondness for fords, and was not a little adventurous in dashing through, whatever might be the state of the flood. If it was at all possible to scramble across, he scorned to go ten yards about. Like Morton in *Old Mortality*, "the management of a horse in water was as familiar to him as when upon a meadow," and most of his heroes appear to have been endowed with similar propensities. Even the White Lady of Avenel delights in the ford. In his description of *Marmion* fording the Tweed at Coldstream we have a characteristic pic-

ture of Scott himself plunging into the river at Ashestiel:—

> "Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
> Where to the Tweed, Leet's eddies creep,
> He ventured desperately;
> And not a moment will he bide
> Till squire, or groom, before him ride,
> Headmost of all, he stems the tide,
> And stems it gallantly."

It is possible that an incident recalled by Skene may have given rise to these lines, when (after a notable flood in 1805) "Scott was the first to attempt passage of the Tweed on his favourite black horse Captain, who had scarcely entered the river when he plunged beyond his depth, and had to swim to the other side with his burden. It requires a good horseman to swim a deep and rapid stream, but he trusted to the vigour of his steady trooper, and in spite of his lameness, kept his seat manfully."

One or two pleasant little photographs of the Ashestiel life appear in the *Familiar Letters*, published by Mr David Douglas in 1894. In a letter to Leyden, dated July 5,

1806, Scott says: "I have taken a lease of the house and estate of Ashestiel. You remember this little mansion upon the Tweed where we dined with the Miss Rutherfords and the Miss Russells. I have sublet the whole of the sheep farm, which is valuable and extensive, and retained in my own hands a small arable farm for cows, horses, sheep, for the table, etc. Here we live all the summer like little kings, and only wish that you could take a scamper with me over the hills in the morning, and return to a clean tablecloth, a leg of forest mutton, and a blazing hearth in the afternoon."

In August he writes to Lady Abercorn: "Our whole habitation could dance very easily in your great *salon* without displacing a single moveable, or endangering a mirror. We have no green pastures, nor stately trees; but to make amends, we have one of the most beautiful streams in the world, winding through steep mountains, which are now purple with the heath-blos-

som. We are eight miles from the nearest market town, and four from the nearest neighbour.[1] The last circumstance I by no means regret, but the first is productive of very curious shifts and ludicrous distresses. . . . For example, my scrutoire having travelled by some slow conveyance, I was obliged—not to mention searching half an hour for this solitary sheet of paper—to sally forth and shoot a crow to procure a quill, which performs its duty extremely ill, as your Ladyship is witness. . . . For the main business of the day, we have the best mutton in the world, and find by experience that the air of our hills makes an excellent sauce. Then we have pigs and poultry, and a whole apparatus of guns, fishing-rods, salmon-spears, and nets for the employment of male visitors, who do

[1] Ashestiel is equidistant from Selkirk and Innerleithen, about 7½ miles. Neighbours are near enough now. The Peel, Laidlawstiel, Holylee, and Fairnalee are all within a comparatively short distance. In Scott's time, Ashestiel lay in the parish of Yarrow; it is now included in the *quoad sacra* parish of Caddonfoot.

not find their sport less agreeable because part of their dinner depends upon it. Then grouse-shooting begins by-and-by, and I have some very good coveys on the moors, besides the privilege of going far and wide over those of my neighbour the Duke of Buccleuch, a favour not the less readily granted because, like many other persons in this world, I make more noise than I do mischief. Then, if all this is insufficient, you shall have hare soup; for am I not the Sheriff of the County, and may I not break the laws when I please, and course out of season? Besides all this, you shall have one of the kindest welcomes which our hospitable mountaineers can afford."

All of which shows how the Shirra's heart lay. He was sportsman no less than student—as eager for out-of-doors amusements as for the morning's desk-work. Few men, it must be said, made test of nature's possibilities more than Scott, "combining strenuous intellectual toil with physical exertions which of themselves would have

sufficed to tax to the uttermost men of more energetic temper and robust frame." There was unlimited scope for his favourite sport of greyhound coursing, as well as for long revelling rides across the hills. He rode with a recklessness which alarmed his companions. "The de'il's in ye, Shirra," one of them would say. "Ye'll never halt till they bring ye hame wi' your feet foremost." At night he had the excitements, not to mention the risks, of salmon-leistering. What rambles, too ("raids" on a smaller scale than in the *Minstrelsy* days), "through all the wide Border," with such a boon comrade as Skene, for instance, whose Reminiscences are among the finest things in the Biography! We see Scott at Ashestiel, thrice happy both in his work and play, a favoured child of fortune, with not a cloud to darken his sky!

Scott's friendships at Ashestiel are among its most enlivening features. It was here that Tom Purdie came into the arena for the first time, in the capacity of poacher,

forsooth,—escaping the law, however, with such a mournful account of his circumstances as to play upon the Sheriff's sympathy, and to end in his being taken into the Sheriff's employment. First he was grieve on the little hill-farm (a position offered, by the way, to Hogg, but declined), and by and by we know how, by dint of that rare fidelity which characterised all his future, he won his way as Scott's trusted factotum, and by far the best-known of Scott's friends in humble life. He had his weakness, to be sure, which drew from Scott the threatened epitaph, "Here lies one who might have been trusted with untold gold, but not with unmeasured whisky." But his death was a staggering blow to Scott. "There is a heart cold that loved me well, and thought of my interest more than his own," he said. Of memorials raised by masters over the remains of faithful servants, none is more touching, none more honest, none more remembered by the world. Peter Mathieson, Purdie's brother-in-law, came

into Scott's service as coachman about the same time—a no less loyal soul, who survived Sir Walter several years.

It was at this time, too, that Scott became acquainted with Mungo Park, the hero of the Niger, who was living at his native cottage of Foulshiels, on the Yarrow, writing the story of his travels, and planning a second expedition into Africa. Many a long talk had those two great Borderers on the subject of African exploration. On the eve of his departure, Park paid Scott a farewell visit, and slept at Ashestiel. Next morning his host accompanied him homeward on horseback by the bridle-path among the silent lonely hills betwixt Tweed and Yarrow. They parted on Williamhope Ridge, at the head of the Peel Glen. A small ditch divided the moor from the road, and in going over it Park's horse stumbled and nearly fell. "I am afraid, Mungo, that is a bad omen," said Scott; to which Park replied, with a smile, "Freits [omens] follow those who look to them." With this he

struck spurs into his horse, galloped off, without once looking back, and Scott saw him no more.

It was now that Scott began the habit of doing his literary work in the morning, rising at five o'clock, lighting his own fire in the season, shaving and dressing with deliberation, sitting down at his desk at six and writing for three hours before breakfast, which he called "breaking the neck of the day's work." After breakfast he had generally two hours more, and by noon he was "his own man," as he phrased it. In good weather he was usually out and on horseback by one o'clock. It was only by a faithful adherence to method that, despite the multitudinous demands upon his time, Scott was able to get through the enormous literary tasks which lay to his hand.

Albeit the birthplace of the great verse-romances, one fears that Ashestiel is, in some way, a forgotten shrine, like Sandy-knowe. It also is slightly off the beaten track, though easily accessible from Gala-

shiels, or Selkirk, or Innerleithen. The traveller by rail may enjoy a momentary glimpse of the spot midway between Clovenfords and Thornielee stations. The first poem finished at Ashestiel was *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.* Though published in 1805, it was not, strictly speaking, a product of the Ashestiel period. Based on the Border legend of "Gilpin Horner," and begun at the suggestion of Scott's "beautiful chieftainess," the Countess of Dalkeith (recalling Cowper's *Sofa* and Lady Austen), *The Lay* was originally meant to be a modern *Minstrelsy* ballad. But the piece had run into three or four cantos, and was, besides, well able to stand on its own independent merits. Hence its separate publication.

A first draft of canto i., "almost in the state in which it was ultimately published," was written at Musselburgh in 1802, while Scott was confined in his lodgings for three days from the effects of a volunteering accident. The main portions of the

poem were composed partly at Lasswade, where Wordsworth, visiting Scott for the first time in September 1803, heard him read and recite the first four cantos, and was greatly charmed with the "novelty of the manners, the clear picturesque descriptions, and the easy glowing energy of much of the verse"; and partly at Ashestiel, whither Scott removed at the following Whitsunday. By Christmas 1804 it had passed through the press, and was given to the public early in the new year.

Sir Tristrem excepted, *The Lay* was the first-fruits of the *Minstrelsy*. For years, as we have seen, the author had been living in a paradise of romance, and with heart and soul in the business, the poem came as a veritable inspiration. It was comparatively easy for Scott to dash off its strong and stirring stanzas. When one recalls how the final volumes of *Waverley* were wrung from the evenings of three summer weeks, a canto per week of *The Lay* will not seem so surprising. Who but one of Scott's mar-

vellous capabilities, living the dual life of past and present, as familiar with the environment of forgotten generations as with his own, could have accomplished feats of intellect so stupendous?

It must be remembered also that Scott's poetical chances were then at their best. English Poetry had come to a kind of transition stage. For a new voice and pen, with fresh measures and methods, there was the amplest room. So Scott drifted into his opportunity. He took the tide at the flood, and it led him on to fortune. With themes so refreshingly novel, and a style of the most romantic attractiveness, one little wonders that he so quickly attained popularity and place as the first poet of the day, until Byron's loftier genius blazed upon the horizon. It was the success of *The Lay* which decided Scott for the literary life—so "wondrous kind" were the critics, so exuberant was the public. And weightiest honour of all for the adventurous Minstrel, "amongst those who hastened to smile upon him were

numbered the great names of William Pitt and Charles Fox." Thus at four-and-thirty, little more than a hundred years since, Walter Scott found the world at his feet. The first edition of *The Lay* was a magnificent quarto of 750 copies, and of succeeding editions, 60,000 copies were sold in the author's lifetime. In the history of British Poetry, says Lockhart, nothing had equalled the demand for *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.* The copyright was sold for £600, and of the whole profits Scott netted a trifle less than £770.

The locale of *The Lay* is chiefly the counties of Selkirk and Roxburgh. At Newark, in Yarrowdale, the Minstrel (whose model was probably Burne the Violer) is made to recite his tale, but the principal scenes are at Branksome, on the Teviot, and at Melrose Abbey. The finest parts of the poem deal with Deloraine's night-ride, the finding of the Book in the dead Wizard's hand, the gathering of the Border clans, and, of course, the fights. Scott's best descriptive

NEWARK

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"*Then oft from Newark's riven tower,*
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power;
A thousand vassals muster'd round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound."

SCOTT.

pieces are most often his fights. Generally speaking, there is no single plot, but a constant succession, if one may so style them. Curiously also, the very suggestion which lent origin to the romance falls into the background entirely, and becomes, as Scott himself felt, more of an "excrescence" than anything else. It was the wild Border life, with its passions, and intrigues, and jealousies; with its loves and heroisms, that Scott found himself depicting, and that passes panorama-like through the whole piece. The poorest part is the goblin superstition, that "ungraceful intruder," to use Jeffrey's apt designation. While, in one or two respects, *The Lay* is inferior to *Marmion*, it nevertheless contains grand and noble and inspiring passages, to which one may turn again and again with undiminished delight, with never a sense of staleness. Not since the days of Burns had the public listened to strains more simple and melodious; even yet it brooks but few rivals.

Marmion, a Tale of Flodden Field, is the

poem which most of all identifies itself with the Ashestiel period. Though, as a tale, it begins with "Norham's castled steep" and the English Border Country, its best things are not those splendidly Homeric passages which have given it a foremost place among verse-romances. These are rather to be found in the Introductory Epistles. They have no historical connection with the narrative itself, and were resented by the critics (notably by Southey) as so many interruptions to it. Still are they replete with the most exquisite word-paintings that Scott has given us, nearly all of them reminiscent of the scenery and friendships of Ashestiel and its surroundings. They tell of such spots as the Shirra's Knowe and the Shirra's Tree, both existent to-day, where particular portions were penned; of excursions to "lone St Mary's silent lake"; of the charmed Sandyknowe memories, and of his own Edinburgh:

> "Liberal, unconfined, and free,
> Flinging her white arms to the sea."

Each Preface is in itself a commemoration of happy fellowships during the Ashestiel days.

It is interesting to note that the last of these prologues is inscribed "Mertoun House," and is redolent of the old-fashioned Christmas festivities which Scott never failed to join in at the seat of Hugh Scott, the head of his own particular branch of the clan, now represented by Lord Polwarth:

> "And thus my Christmas still I hold
> Where my great-grandsire ["Beardie"] came of old
> With amber beard and flaxen hair
> And reverend apostolic air."

Marmion, for which Scott received a thousand guineas before Constable saw a line of it, was published in February 1808, as a splendid quarto, price one guinea and a half. The edition—2000 copies—was disposed of in less than a month. Numerous editions followed, and up to the date of Lockhart's *Life* (1837) the sale was estimated at 50,000. It is rather curious to recall Jeffrey's objection to the lack of patriotic

feeling on the Scottish side, as he alleged, and still more strange that the stoical editor of the *Edinburgh*—one of the author's intimates, too—alone of all the critics should have handled the poem with such ill-conceived severity.

It was immediately after the appearance of *Marmion* that Scott helped to launch the opposition Tory *Quarterly*; and, having broken with Constable, set up his own publishing house under the name of John Ballantyne & Co., a blunder for which there is no palliation. It was Ballantyne's name, therefore, which appeared on the title-page of his next work, *The Lady of the Lake*, published in May 1810, and perhaps the most popular of all his poems. For the copyright Scott received 2000 guineas. The first edition, in quarto, consisted of 2050 copies, and "disappeared instantly," being followed in the same year by four other editions in octavo, amounting in all to 17,250 copies. Down to 1836, Lockhart estimates the total at 50,000. The poem, which

was well received by the critics, including Jeffrey, who made handsome amends for his attack on *Marmion*, registers the high-water mark in Scott's poetical career. It has been more frequently reprinted than any of the other poems, and Jeffrey's prophecy, that *The Lady of the Lake* would be oftener read than either of its author's earlier romances, has come true. It was *The Lady* which really created the ever-growing enthusiasm for Highland scenery, for the Loch Katrine district in particular. Just as Scott may be said to have "made" Melrose, so is the Trossachs locality no less his "making" also.

Ashestiel saw only the projection of *The Lord of the Isles*, but the hastily-written *Vision of Don Roderick*, a poem published on behalf of Britain's Portuguese allies in the wars with Napoleon, is a product of the place. Greatest of all the memories of Ashestiel is that of *Waverley*. That, no less than *Marmion*, was "thought out" when Scott was having his "grand gallops among

the braes," or wandering far from home with no companion but his dog, "amid the green and melancholy wildernesses where Yarrow creeps from her fountains." But of this in its proper quarter.

CHAPTER IV

ABBOTSFORD

Two things—the near home-coming of his kinsman, the owner of Ashestiel, and his ambition to be himself a "Tweedside laird" —were the chief causes for what must be regarded as the most memorable move in Scott's career, namely, the creation of the world-famous Abbotsford. There is no occasion to cavil at Scott's liking for a lairdship. It was a legitimate ambition under the circumstances. As a man of good social position, of literary reputation, and possessed of fair means (his income was now approaching £2000 a year), he could well afford to entertain such a desire. To make Scott the target, as has been done, for an attack on the pride and vanity of human wishes, is noways warranted by the facts of the case. Granted that he did commit mis-

takes in the realisation of his dream of "playing the grand old feudal lord again," there was no reason why he should not have succeeded to the utmost. That he did fail (approximately) was owing entirely to his indiscretions. On a more modest scale, he would have attained his ideal untrammelled in its felicity. But a more modest scale did not suit Scott, and he had to suffer the consequences.

Surely, however, no stigma attaches to him for having desired to be laird of Abbotsford, and to found a new branch of the Scotts! We blame him, not for being a lord of acres, but for being a lord of too many acres before they had become truly his own. For, as the story of his life makes manifest, he was from the first only nominally proprietor of Abbotsford. Still, the fact remains that, apart from Abbotsford and its "making," Scott might never have been the man that he became. In this respect it is fortunate for the world that he had not the option of purchasing either Ashestiel or

Broadmeadows, since, as may not be doubted, Abbotsford proved to be the stimulus of an intellectual output which has had probably no parallel in its own sphere.

It is almost one hundred years since Scott acquired the land on which arose his lordly mansion. A characteristic description of the site is contained in his letter to Leyden, of date August 25, 1811: "The best domestic intelligence is, that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire, his lease of Ashestiel being out, has purchased about a hundred acres, extending along the banks of the Tweed just above the confluence of the Gala, and about three miles from Melrose. There, saith fame, he designs to bigg himself a bower—*sibi et amicis*—and happy will he be when India shall return you to a social meal at his cottage. The place looks at present very like 'poor Scotland's gear.' It consists of a bank and haugh as poor and bare as Sir John Falstaff's regiment; though I fear, ere you come to see, the verdant screen I am about to spread over its nakedness will have in

some degree removed this reproach. But it has a wild, solitary air, and commands a splendid reach of the Tweed; and, to crown all, in the words of Touchstone, 'it is a poor thing, but mine own.' "

That he had gauged the potentialities of the place goes without saying. For only a few years sufficed to show how clearly his prophet's eye had foreseen its wealth of promise and beauty. The spot comes upon the scene for the first time in history about the year 1797, as the property of Dr Robert Douglas, minister of Galashiels, then a mere hamlet, emerging on its career as a centre of the woollen trade.

Dr Douglas,[1] who has some claim to remembrance as a pioneer in affairs both agricultural and industrial (he was known as "the Father of Galashiels"), had, how-

[1] It was to Dr Douglas that Mrs Cockburn (Alison Rutherford, of Fairnalee, authoress of *The Flowers of the Forest*) wrote in 1777, telling of Scott, then in his seventh year, as "the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw." The association of the two men, thirty-four years afterwards, is of singular interest.

ever, done little or nothing for his estate by the Tweed. He never lived there, and contemporary accounts describe the place as exhibiting anything but an attractive appearance. "A low-built, one-storey house, standing in what was literally a *hole*," says one; while another remarks that it "had little to recommend it as a site for a stately mansion." Lockhart, indeed, alleges that it actually went by the nickname of Clarty (*i.e.* filthy) Hole. But this is a mistake, as is seen from the title-deeds, the original designation being really Cartley or Cartlaw Hole. "Clarty" was merely a vulgar play on the name, though apparently apt enough. Nevertheless, as has been said, the compensations were sufficient to weigh against its lack of charm. These were, in Scott's eyes, the "ever-dear Tweed," his favourite river, flowing here "broad and bright, over a bed of milk-white pebbles"; the proximity of "Eildon's triple height"; and the splendidly storied neighbourhood of Melrose and Selkirk.

On ground now enclosed within the Abbotsford estate, the last clan battle of the Borders had been fought (1526); and from a ford at the junction of the Tweed and the Gala, used by the abbots of long ago, the henceforth classical designation of Scott's new lairdship was derived.

The flitting from Ashestiel took place at Whitsunday 1812—a comical affair, according to Scott's account of it. "The neighbours," he wrote to Lady Alvanley, "have been much delighted with the procession of furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux chevalier* of ancient Border fame; and the very cows, for ought I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged, rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading ponies, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad

subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsy groups of Callot upon their march."

For the next twelve years Abbotsford was in the making. From a mere cottage, which it was at first, it passed to the villa stage, finishing up with what Scott termed a "manor-house," albeit a "castle" more or less. That was in 1824, after which date the building remained without alteration till the Hope Scott period in 1853. Meanwhile the estate itself had stretched out considerably. The hundred acres had grown to over a thousand, for all of which fabulous prices were paid to the greedy "cocklairds" of the locality. From first to last the total outlay in the construction of Abbotsford, including purchases of land and house furnishings, could not have been short of £75,000.

Opinions differ as to the character of the building. Let us remember that it was reared on no set plan, but with a desire to reproduce some of the features of the an-

cient baronial style which Scott so much admired. It is curious to contrast the view taken of the place during Scott's lifetime with that which has been expressed since his day. At first it was all praise and flattery. Then, we read of "a perfect picture of the wonderful owner's mind"; of "a poem in stone"; of "a mosaic of Scottish history"; of a resemblance to "places one dreams about"; of "a romance in stone and lime"; and so on. Later, we are confronted with statements about "the ugly Abbotsford"; about "the most incongruous pile that gentlemanly modernism ever designed"; about "a sad piece of patch-work"; and many other architectural enormities.

Is Abbotsford ugly? and is it a superlatively gloomy spot? Surely not! Stripped of its associations, there is nothing specially depressing about it. To recall the tragedy of its owner's last years, and the fate of his family, introduces an element of pathos, to be sure, but it does not affect the complexion of the place, which most

ABBOTSFORD, NORTH FRONT, FACING THE TWEED

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"I have bought a property in the neighbourhood, extending along the banks of the river Tweed for about half-a-mile. It is very bleak at present, having little to recommend it but the vicinity of the river; but as the ground is well adapted by nature to grow wood, and is considerably various in form and appearance, I have no doubt that by judicious plantations it may be rendered a very pleasant spot. This is the greatest incident which has lately taken place in our domestic concerns, and I assure you we are not a little proud of being greeted as laird and lady of Abbotsford."

SCOTT, 1811.

"About July, Abbotsford will, I think, be finished, when I shall, like the old Duke of Queensberry who built Drumlanrig, fold up the accounts in a sealed parcel, with a label bidding 'the deil pick out the een' of any of my successors that shall open it."

SCOTT, 1824.

people consider a singularly delightful domicile indeed. "Irregular," "fantastic," "bewildering" it undoubtedly is, but it is not distasteful; nor is it, as Dean Stanley declared, "a place to be seen once, and never again." As a matter of fact, one cannot pass judgment after a mere cursory visit. The more Abbotsford is known, the more must its real beauty and genius be sympathetically understood and venerated.

Unfortunately for the present-day visitor, the exterior of the edifice is little in evidence. A glimpse of the garden front is about all that is to be had; and the north front, facing the Tweed, is not seen at all. As it is the latter which figures most prominently in the photographs, readers may be reminded that this is really the back of the building, the entrance being turned southwards. It is rather a pity that arrangements cannot be made for the fuller inspection of an abode so cosmopolitan in its interest. To enter by the castellated gateway into the beflowered courtyard; to

stand by the fountain formed from part of Edinburgh's Cross,

> "Whence royal edict rang,
> And voice of Scotland's law was sent
> In glorious trumpet-clang";

to see Maida's effigy; to examine the Tolbooth door, or the porch modelled from Linlithgow Palace, and the numberless relics of antiquity that abound in every corner, and in most unlikely places, are possibilities that await the visitor of the future. It was Mr Hope Scott who contrived the present mode of public entrance by means of a lane leading from the Selkirk road, passing beneath the fine freestone screen that divides the courtyard from the gardens, into one of the basement rooms, whence access is given to the apartments above, which are open to sightseers. The rest of the house is in occupation.

The usual order of going round begins with the Study, which remains very much as Scott left it. The room is of fair size, and is lighted by a large window looking out to the courtyard. A private staircase con-

nects it with the bedroom portion of the house. In the Study are the desk at which most of the Waverleys were written;[1] Scott's chair; Lockhart's chair; and the Wallace chair, presented by Train. Scott's card-plate and a print of Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims are over the mantel-piece. There is the portrait of Claverhouse which probably suggested *Old Mortality*, and portraits of Rob Roy and Queen Elizabeth. In the adjoining turret-room, which Scott styled his Speak-a-Bit, a solitary object is the death-mask of Sir Walter—the face of a brother man stretched out too long upon the rack of this rough world. The majesty of the forehead and the dour earnestness of the features tell of Walter Scott the genius; but it is in the corners of the mouth that all the pathos lies. In them there is the droop of an infinite weariness, and it makes the heart ache.

[1] Only such articles as are more intimately connected with Scott are mentioned in these notes on the Study and other apartments. See Mrs Maxwell Scott's *Catalogue* and the present writer's *Abbotsford* for a detailed description.

The Library is the largest and finest apartment in the house. The ceiling, copied from Melrose and Rosslyn, is, alas, chiefly of stucco! The book-presses contain about 10,000 volumes (including the Study, etc., there are twice that number). Nearly all the furniture in this room was presented to Scott, and is of great value. Only one portrait has place here—a full-length of the second Sir Walter (by Sir William Allan). A colonel of the 15th Hussars, he served in India from 1839 to 1847, and died at sea near the Cape on his way home to Scotland. With him perished the hope of the Scotts of Abbotsford. The Chantrey Bust (1820), of which Lockhart said that it "alone preserves for posterity the cast of expression most fondly remembered by all who mingled in Scott's domestic circle," occupies a conspicuous niche at one end of the room. Relics of Scott are contained in the glass table by the fine bow window—Beardie's quaigh; the knife used by Scott as a boy; a copy of the miniature referred to at page

27; miniatures of Scott at the time of his marriage, and of Miss Carpenter and her father.

In the Drawing-Room — still bearing (wonderfully fresh) the Chinese paper presented in 1822 by Captain Hugh Scott—the paintings include that of Sir Walter by Raeburn; Lady Scott by Saxon; Scott's mother; his daughters Anne and Sophia; and the Hon. Mrs Maxwell Scott. Amyas Cawood's curious, if repulsive, picture of the Head of Queen Mary after decapitation hangs in this apartment.

Stepping westward, we next enter the Armoury, which runs right across the house, making a sort of ante-room between the dining and the drawing rooms. Here are displayed what is perhaps the finest private collection of arms in the world, gathered out of all ages and countries. Relics of Rob Roy are outstanding—his gun, sword, dirk, and sporran. The place of honour, however, must be given to the sword of the Great Marquis of Montrose, a "gabion" for which

Scott was indebted to John Ballantyne. Claverhouse's pistols; Sir Walter's own gun and accoutrements worn by him when a yeoman in the Edinburgh Light Dragoons; the second Sir Walter's sword and spurs; the keys of Loch Leven Castle; Queen Mary's crucifix; the rifle of Andreas Hoffer, the Tyrolese patriot—these are the most noteworthy of the other objects. The Armoury paintings illustrate the domestic side of Scott's life. Here hang portraits of Tom Purdie (by Landseer); of John Swanston, Purdie's successor; of Peter Mathieson (coachman) with "Donald" the pony; of "Hinse of Hinsfeldt," Scott's cat; and his dog "Ginger." Kirkpatrick Sharpe's sketches should be noted, as well as Greenshields's statuette of Scott—*sic sedebat.* The Entrance Hall comes last, with its pretty Bellenden windows, "shedding a sort of rich, red twilight" around the spacious apartment and its trophies. "To cover the walls of a stone house in Selkirkshire," wrote Carlyle (forgetting for the moment that Ab-

botsford is in Roxburghshire), "with nicknacks, ancient armour, and genealogical shields, what can we name it but a being bit with a delirium of a kind?" But it was Scott's hobby, and how has humanity profited by it! The "genealogical shields" alluded to, adorn the ceiling of the Entrance Hall, running along both sides, with the inscription in black letter:

> These be the Coat Armouris of ye Clannis and men of name quha Keepit the Scottish Marches in ye days of auld. They were worthie in thair tyme and in thair defens God thaim defendid.

The arms of Scott's own ancestors occupy a range of shields down the centre of the roof, thirteen of which are emblazoned with the names and arms of the families with whom he counted kin. The armour suits are fine specimens. The largest is believed to have belonged to Sir John Cheney, the biggest man who fought at Bosworth. Here also are Archbishop Sharp's grate; Ralph Erskine's pulpit, turned into a wine-cupboard; the keys of the Edinburgh

Tolbooth; the Hermitage touting-horn, a relic of the *Minstrelsy* "raids"; Marie Antoinette's clock; "the mistletoe chest where Ginevra lay" (more than one Italian city shows the true original!); and, most touching of all, the last suit worn by the Wizard of Abbotsford. "When I was at Abbotsford," wrote Dickens in 1851, "I saw in a glass case the last clothes Scott wore. Among them an old white hat, which seemed to be tumbled and bent and broken by the uneasy, purposeless wandering hither and thither of his heavy head. It so embodied Lockhart's pathetic description of him when he tried to write and laid down his pen and cried, that it associated itself in my mind with broken power and mental weakness from that hour."

The Dining-room, looking out on the Tweed, is not open to the public. Portraits of Scott's ancestors adorn the walls—portraits which, it is said, he was never tired of examining. Within the window alcove, the last act of the tragedy was played

out exactly seventy-five years ago as these lines are being written.

On the Abbotsford estate are Chiefswood, the "bower" to which Lockhart brought his bride in 1821. Part of *The Pirate* was penned here; and on the lawn in front, little Johnnie Lockhart ("Hugh Littlejohn"), Scott's grandchild, always delicate, heard the first of those *Tales of a Grandfather*, which still remain the best popular History of Scotland. Much of Lockhart's own good work was done at Chiefswood—*Valerius*; *Adam Blair*; and not a few of the *Spanish Ballads*. The "runnel" behind, originally Dick's Cleugh, Scott christened the "Rhymer's Glen." It was a misnomer, but Scott liked to cherish the fancy that his own domain contained the scene of True Thomas's liaison with the Fairy Queen. Cauldshiels Loch bounds the estate on the north. Here Scott wrote (in 1817) the most personally pathetic of his verses, beginning,

"The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill
In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet;

The westland wind is hush and still—
The lake lies sleeping at my feet."

Huntlyburn (originally Toftfield), the residence of Sir Adam Ferguson, and Kaeside, Laidlaw's house on the heights, are both embraced in the Abbotsford area. Upon Faldonside, adjoining Abbotsford on the west, Scott cast longing eyes, and actually offered £30,000 for it, but Nicol Milne was obdurate. For Scott's good, surely! Darnick Tower, too, fascinated him, and John Heiton was equally unbending.[1]

Of Scott's manifolded life at Abbotsford there is no need to write at length. Lockhart has done that once for all, and a perusal of Basil Hall's "Journal," embodied in the Biography, together with Washington Irving's essay, make plain to us the real man in Walter Scott. Albeit the Enchanter

[1] Faldonside belonged in 1566 to Andrew Ker, who was embroiled in the Rizzio affair. He married John Knox's widow. Darnick has been a Heiton holding from the 16th century. The Tower is in admirable preservation, and contains a fine collection of relics and curios. It is open to the public. One of its owners, also a John Heiton, was author of *The Castes of Edinburgh.*

for the touch of whose wand the world was waiting eagerly, it is the simplicity of the Abbotsford life which provokes admiration. Scott was not, in his ordinary life at any rate, the aristocrat he is said by some to have mostly shown himself. Sprung of "gentle birth," as well as having raised himself by his own abilities to a great position, and proud of it, no doubt, he was still one of the humblest of Nature's gentlemen; as much at home amongst the poor and the undistinguished as in the company of peers of the realm, or royal George himself. Abbotsford had no more joyful hours for Scott than those spent in the fellowship of common men like Laidlaw, and Tom Purdie, and Joseph Shillinglaw. Is not the finest tribute to Scott's worth as master and man seen in the statement made by one of his servants, "He speaks to us as if we were blood relations"? Abbotsford, it is said, was like a little happy world of its own—a most emphatic exception to the cynic's rule. In the disillusion-

ising domain of domestic life, the hero who never altered was Scott.

The "strenuous life," a phrase which covers so much, was practised to the full by Scott at Abbotsford. How he managed to get through such an amount of work, and, at the same time, to appear so much at leisure, was a source of surprise to his friends. "I know," said Cadell, his publisher, once to him, "that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere pen-work, but when is it that you think?" "Oh," said Scott, "I lie simmering over things for an hour or so before I get up, and there's the time I am dressing, to overhaul my half-sleeping, half-waking *projet de chapitre*, and when I get the paper before me it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a doze in the plantations, and while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world."

His maxim was never to be doing noth-

ing, and in making the most of his time he served both himself and others. One may mention, also, the more than hospitable manner in which he was wont to entertain his constant army of guests, and to treat with amazing urbanity the hosts of the uninvited.

In his more sacred relationships, Abbotsford had very tender memories for Scott. Gossip's rancorous tongue has not been silent, assuredly. But whatever it may have said, Lockhart's chapters afford sterling proof of the comfort and the affection and the pleasure which characterised the whole family life. Lady Scott made him an excellent wife, notwithstanding her Frenchified ways and her utter lack of sympathy with the literary life. There are no passages in the Journal more truly touching than those written at the time of his deep agony. In his children, Scott was unfortunate. None of the four were ever strong physically, and none of them were long-livers. They were the joy of his life,

both at Abbotsford and Edinburgh, but how soon after his own candle was extinguished did their brief lights burn out! Anne (the original of Alice Lee in *Woodstock*), his younger daughter, died less than a year after her father; Mrs Lockhart, in little more than four years and a half; Charles, the younger son, within nine, and Walter within fifteen years. Anne and Sophia lie in Kensal Green Cemetery, London; Charles at Teheran;[1] and Walter at Dryburgh.

As to the fortunes of Abbotsford from 1847, Walter Scott Lockhart, a Lieutenant in the 16th Lancers, Lockhart's younger son, succeeded his uncle, but died unmarried in 1853. His sister Charlotte thereupon came into possession. She was the wife of James Robert Hope, Q.C., who, on her succeeding to Abbotsford, assumed the family name of Scott. It is to Mr Hope Scott that Abbotsford owes its re-

[1] He was private secretary to Sir John McNeill, Commissioner to the Persian Court. His remains lie in the Armenian Church. The grave is in excellent condition.

construction. He did wonders for the place, which had been sadly neglected since 1832. He added a new west wing, and effected many improvements, both internally and externally. Upon his death in 1873, Abbotsford went to his only daughter by Charlotte Lockhart, his first wife; and in 1874 that daughter, Mary Monica Hope Scott, then sole surviving descendant of Sir Walter Scott, was wedded to the Hon. Joseph Constable-Maxwell, third son of the eleventh Baron Herries of Terregles. Of this marriage there are four sons and three daughters. On the eldest, Walter, an officer in the Army, who saw service in South Africa, many hopes are centred. As heir to Abbotsford, and the bearer of a name so illustrious, may it also be said of him that "the might of the whole world's good wishes with him goes"!

CHAPTER V

FOOTPRINTS OF WAVERLEY

In the popular imagination, Abbotsford is regarded as the birthplace of all the Waverleys. Students of Scott know, however, that comparatively few of the Novels were written there. Castle Street saw the genesis of at least three-fourths, and it was there that *Waverley* itself was licked into shape. Curiously, the associations of *Waverley*, the first of the brilliant galaxy, are with Scott's three houses, Ashestiel, Abbotsford, and 39 Castle Street. Ashestiel may be said to be the cradling-ground of the romance. "Contentedly," says Ruskin (writing of Ashestiel), "in such space and splendour of domicile, *Waverley* was begun." The date seems to have been 1805 (the year of *The Lay*), as Lockhart assumed from the water-mark of the manuscript. At that time Scott had written seven chapters. The work was an-

nounced as a coming publication, and so would have appeared eight years earlier than it did but for the advice of Will Erskine, who was only "faintly interested" in Scott's new venture.

The MS. was accordingly set aside, to lie unheeded for five years. James Ballantyne saw it in 1810, but gave no encouragement. Again it was put past, and lost sight of for other three years. By a mere accident, the missing sheets were discovered in a kind of odds-and-ends cabinet at Abbotsford, into which Scott happened to look for fishing flies. This time his own better judgment made him go on with the story. So rapidly did he execute his purpose that the remainder of it was accomplished within the almost incredible space of three weeks, the evenings principally, during the months of May and June 1813. Lockhart's incident of "the hand" is so well known that it may only be referred to as showing that the bulk of the novel was a product of the "den" at Castle Street. On

July 7th, 1814, *Waverley* was given to the world anonymously in three volumes, at the price of a guinea and a half, the sum which obtained so long for the older-fashioned form of fiction. The 1000 copies which made up the first edition disappeared within a month, a second issue of 2000 being on sale during August. Before the end of the year, 3000 more had been called for, and up to the date of the Life, Lockhart computes the circulation at 40,000.[1] It is stated that *Waverley* was offered to a London publisher, who refused it. Ballantyne then opened up negotiations with Constable, who haggled about the price, and offered £700. Eventually the half-profits plan was agreed to, though Constable afterwards regretted that he did not accept Ballantyne's offer of £1000 for the complete copyright.

[1] Compared with the circulation of some present-day novels, this figure is trifling. But the conditions between then and now have vastly altered. The taste for fiction has been whetted to an enormous degree, while the price of books has steadily decreased. See Chapter VIII. for a consideration of the Scott literature to-day.

In a sense, one may be sorry that Scott listened to Erskine's condemnation. But for that, what treasures more might we not have had? *Don Roderick*; *Rokeby*; *The Bridal of Triermain*, could well have been sacrificed for the ten or twelve novels that, judging by the future output at any rate, were amply possible within the period. It cannot be doubted that *Waverley* would have been as great a success in 1805 as it was in 1814. But the years between were far from being idly spent, and Scott was doubtless the better equipped for this the real work of his life when its full time had come.

The sub-title, *'Tis Sixty Years Since*, carries the romance back to the 'Forty-five, the most memorable episode in Scottish history. With every phase of the Rising, its localities and actors, Scott was on familiar ground. The theme appealed to his strongly romantic temperament, and the chapters, after the story has been really entered upon, never fail to fascinate with

their rare flow of energy, and the fine historic sense to which they are attuned. Fortunate it was for Scotland that Jacobitism ended as it did! Who is there, however, who has not a more or less sneaking admiration for the heroes and heroines of the ill-starred attempt? None may question the sincerity of those who made such risks for one who, after all, showed himself not altogether worthy of the love lavished upon him or the blood spilled on his behalf.

The *Waverley* arena confines itself chiefly to the Perth Highlands, though the exigencies of the story lead to other parts of Scotland, and to the English Border, where the closing tragic scenes are enacted. Tradition ascribes the impress of a man's fingers on a window-sill at Carlisle Castle as the work of MacDonald of Tynedrish, a prototype of the gallant Fergus Mac-Ivor. The "solemn and chivalrous" Baron of Bradwardine is like enough to have been the fourth Lord Forbes of Pitsligo, who was "out" in the '15 and the '45.

Davie Gellatley, "no further a fool than was necessary to avoid hard labour," was drawn, as Robert Chambers thinks, from daft Jock Gray of Gilmanscleuch, in Ettrick, a wandering rustic known to all the Border. Tully-Veolan, the mansion of the story, has a plethora of originals. Traquair is as good as any, but Grantully and Craighall,[1] in Perthshire; Bruntsfield, Craigcrook, Ravelston, all Edinburgh houses, and the Galloway Kenmure, are claimants.

Guy Mannering, the second of the Waverleys, followed in 1815. It was the work of a winter six weeks, at Abbotsford mostly, and was the equal of its predecessor in popularity. The first edition of

[1] "From the position of this striking place [Craighall], as Mr Clerk at once perceived, and as the author afterwards confessed to him, that of Tully-Veolan was very faithfully copied; though in the description of the house itself, and its garden, many features were adopted from Bruntsfield and Ravelston."—LOCKHART. It is curious to find Lockhart passing over Traquair, which exhibits so remarkable a resemblance to the mansion depicted in the story. Without doubt, Scott had this ancient history-haunted pile in his mind's eye at the time he began *Waverley*. As a matter of fact, he was then living within a few miles of it.

2000 was sold out on the day of publication. Within three months second and third editions were issued, and the sales previous to 1829 made a total of 10,000. For the novel, Scott received the sum of £2000. Next to *Old Mortality*, *Guy Mannering* is unquestionably the finest romance from Scott's pen. Ruskin places it before *In Memoriam*. Wilkie Collins read it fifty times over. Gilfillan declares that it runs as one sentence. Much of the plot drew its inspiration from Joseph Train, that good Galloway gauger to whom the world owes such a debt. But for Train, who freely gave up his own literary ambitions[1] to become a kind of lion's provider to Scott, *Guy Mannering* might not have been heard of. Nor *Old Mortality* either, to be sure! For, as

[1] Train (1779–1852), an excise-officer, was author of a volume of poems, *Strains of the Mountain Muse*, the publication of which, in 1814, brought him into communication with Scott. His other works were a *History of the Isle of Man*, and *The Buchanites from First to Last*. He died at Castle-Douglas, and on his tombstone, in Kelton Kirkyard, he is commemorated as "the friend and correspondent of Sir Walter Scott." See *Memoir* by John Patterson.

we shall see, that, too, was Train's suggestion. A fortunate relationship for Scott, and for literary history! In the sphere of letters there is no more pleasing record of self-abnegation.

Guy Mannering belongs to Galloway. There is only the scantiest evidence to show that Scott ever was in the Stewartry. But having Train for his guide was sufficient for the topography of the tale. Hence the true Guy Mannering Country, despite the claims of more than one other district, is not unlikely to be that lying between Gatehouse-of-Fleet and Creetown, the coast line of which was described by Queen Victoria as "the most beautiful shore-road in Britain." The striking resemblances between the scenery painted in the novel and that in the neighbourhood of Ravenshall, can scarcely be regarded as a coincidence. Architecturally considered, Ellangowan is, of course, Caerlaverock Castle, on the Nith side of the Solway. But beyond that circumstance, there is no reason to doubt that

Scott—whether he were ever in Kirkcudbrightshire or not—had in his mind's eye the localities that Train had mapped out for him, localities with which no one was more familiar.

The gypsy part of *Guy Mannering* Scott gathered from his father's memory of the redoubtable Jean Gordon of Yetholm, and his own recollection of her no less Amazonian grand-daughter, "a woman of more than female height, dressed in a long red cloak, who commenced acquaintance by giving me an apple, but whom, nevertheless, I looked upon with much awe." Meg Merrilies was either the one or the other, or a compound of both. Dominie Sampson was drawn, as Lockhart supposes, from George Thomson, son of the minister of Melrose: a possible original, although it is not at all improbable that Scott was thinking of James Sanson, tutor to the Elliston Scotts, and latterly occupant of preaching stations, first at Caerlanrig (now Teviothead), then at Leadhills, where he died in

1794. Sanson assuredly answers to the Dominie's every characteristic, and in a quaint sketch of him (in the possession of the present writer), procured in the Earlston district, of which Sanson was a native, he is expressly designated as Scott's original. Dandie Dinmont, the best rustic picture that has ever been exhibited to the reading public, is doubtless a composite character, made up of Willie Laidlaw *plus* Elliot of Millburnholm (Charlieshope) and Archie Park of Lewinshope (Thorlieshope), whose wife was an "Ailie." Scott did not meet Davidson of Hindlee, owner of all the Mustards and Peppers, till some years after the novel was written. Dirk Hatteraick, "half Manx, half Dutchman, half devil," was a Dutch skipper yclept Yawkins. Tod Gabbie was studied from Tod Willie, the huntsman of the hills above Loch Skene. Colonel Mannering was, as Hogg put it, "just Walter Scott painted by himself." In Julia Mannering we have a portrait from the life of Miss Carpenter. Gilsland, where

Scott and the latter became acquainted, figures in the incident of Mumps Ha', whose site is still pointed out. Tib Mumps [Margaret Carrick] herself lies in the churchyard of Denton among the Cumberland hills.

The publication of the third of the Waverley series in May 1816 was followed by the fourth—the first of *The Tales of My Landlord*—in December, making no fewer than three novels in one year. Those were *The Antiquary* (Scott's own favourite), with *Old Mortality*, the most fanatically criticised, and, curiously, *The Black Dwarf*, one of the least interesting of the number. Copies of *The Antiquary* went off at the rate of a thousand a day for the first week, and of the *Tales*, three editions, making a total of 6000, were at press within six weeks. As *Waverley* dealt with the days of his fathers, and *Guy Mannering* with those of his own youth, so *The Antiquary* pictured a period only some ten or fifteen years back, an era that was still remembered by reason of its political unrest and alarms of French in-

vasion. It is the charm of this latter tale that, whilst lacking the romance and excitement of its predecessors, it can at least claim to be painted direct from nature, and to be redolent of that rusticity of life and manners so relished by its author. There are no more perfect little gems of portraiture than *The Antiquary* contains. Here we have Scottish peasant life at its best. The little seaside village, with its play of light and shade, its intrigues, its gossip, its round of comedy and tragedy, are limned by the hand of a Master who makes every one of his characters live and move like real creatures of flesh and blood, rather than of the imagination. For a piece of humorous writing, the post-office scene in the fifteenth chapter has been seldom matched, even by its own author. The locale of the novel is considered to be the fishing-villages of the Arbroath coast. Arbroath itself is Fairport, and either Auchmithie or Ethie Haven stands for Musselcrag. Ethie Castle is the Knockwinnock,

as Hospitalfield is the Monkbarns of the story. Portobello and Musselburgh are not, as has been suggested, the localities in question. The figure of the Antiquary was modelled from "that dear friend of my father's," George Constable (see page 27); but, as Lockhart says, there is also a hint of Scott himself. Sir Walter does indeed give himself away in his "Gabions" fragment, where he actually assumes the name of Jonathan Oldbuck. Old Sir John Clerk of Dumcrieff was the hero of the story, "Praetorium here, praetorium there, I made it wi' a flaughter spade."

As to the original of Edie Ochiltree—"that mirror of philosophic vagabonds and Nestor of beggars," as Washington Irving described him—there is no dispute. He was Andrew Gemmels, the most noted blue-gown of the Borders, whom Scott had seen at Kelso and elsewhere, and heard from his own lips the story of his soldierings and wanderings after Fontenoy. A songster and a romancer, a mimic, and a satirist of

the first water, Andrew was a very *persona grata* (despite his tongue) throughout his long life spent by Tweed and Teviot. He lived to his 106th year, and was buried at Roxburgh.

Lockhart tells how, a few days after the publication of *The Antiquary*, Scott was visited at Edinburgh by Train, who brought with him several curios for the Abbotsford Collection (Rob Roy's spleuchan among them), at the same time handing over a fresh sheaf of traditionary gleanings which he had gathered among the tale-tellers of his district. Next morning, at breakfast, at least two new novels were under discussion, *Old Mortality* and *Rob Roy*. To Train is due the honour of having given title to the first of these, taken from Robert Paterson, *alias* "Old Mortality," into whose mouth the romance was put, as was *The Lay* into that of the Minstrel. An unconscionably eccentric individual was "Old Mortality's" prototype. A native of Hawick (not Closeburn), and a mason to trade, Paterson developed an ex-

traordinary mania for tombstone reparations. For over forty years his familiar figure might be encountered in any of the Covenanting burying-grounds throughout Dumfries and Galloway, or Ayrshire. Hardly a monument covering the dust of the faithful but bears his chisel's impress! Even at Dunnottar, where Scott met him in 1793, he plied his self-imposed task. Unfortunately, some features in his career are not very creditable. It is impossible, for instance, to condone his treatment of his wife and children, whom he literally abandoned, to such lengths did his passion for the "stones" lead him. Yet, withal, he did a good work. And he inspired *Old Mortality*. His own grave at Caerlaverock stood long unmarked, till the Messrs Black, of London, the publishers of Scott's works, erected the present modest memorial. The scene of *Old Mortality* is laid chiefly in Clydesdale. Tillietudlem, Lady Bellenden's castle, where Morton besieged his lady-love, and the zealous Cuddie Headrigg was re-

pulsed by the scalding kail-brose of the coquettish Jenny Dennison, had its original in the ruin of Craignethan, once the property of a Lord Evandale. The wild and gloomy glens of Moffat Water, however, and the recesses of Loch Skene and Gameshope—a conventicle region familiar to Scott from early days—were laid under tribute for much of the scenery of the story.

Of *The Black Dwarf*, included with *Old Mortality* in the *Tales of My Landlord*, Lockhart states that "however imperfect, and unworthy, as a work of art, it derives a singular interest from its delineation of the dark feelings so often connected with physical deformity." To Scott, though himself in this category, there were no such feelings,—unlike Byron, whose whole life was embittered by his defect. A chance meeting some nineteen years previous to the publication of the novel, furnished Scott with the basal matter for his story. On the way to Gilsland, in July 1797, he stayed for a day or two at Hallyards, in Peeblesshire, the

Fergusons' summer quarters. Within a mile lived David Ritchie, a dwarf less than three and a half feet in height, the most extraordinary personage in the locality. There is pathos in his past history. "Like a deer hunted from the herd," by the derision of his fellow-men he had been driven from his occupation of brush-making (which he seems to have followed both at Edinburgh and at Dublin) to the seclusion of his native glens, "where he sought," says Scott, "to have the least possible communication with the world which scoffed at him." Here he reared a hut of turf and stones, in which, along with a sister, he lived till the year 1802, when the cottage which still bears his name was erected, though that has been altered considerably since his day. The dwarf is described as having an oblong skull, so hard that he could strike it with ease through a door-panel or a barrel-end. He had deep-set black eyes and ogreish features—a long, sharp nose meeting his far-projecting chin;

legs like a pair of corkscrews, which were never allowed to be seen; fin-like feet, on which he never wore shoes, but pieces of cloth; a screech-owl voice; and an almost demoniacal laugh.

To William Chambers (who was present) we are indebted for the narrative of Scott's interview with his future hero. The visitor's lameness seemed to engender a bond of sympathy between him and the dwarf. Grinning for a moment with a smile less bitter than his wont, the dwarf crossed to the door, double-locked it, then coming up to the stranger, seized him by the wrist, saying, "Man, ha'e ye ony poo'er?" meaning magical power, to which he himself made some pretence. Scott disavowing the possession of any such gift, the dwarf signalled to a huge black cat, which thereupon jumped up and perched itself on a shelf, looking, to the excited senses of the visitors, as if it were verily the familiar spirit of the place. "He has poo'er; ay, *he* has poo'er," repeated the grotesque figure, seat-

ing himself as he spoke, and grinning horribly as if enjoying the weird impression he had made. At this point, Dr Ferguson called to him to undo the door, as they must now be going; and when the party were once more in the open, Scott was observed to be pale as ashes and agitated in every limb.

A being so odd, and circumstances so uncanny, were not to be soon forgotten. Hence, in course of time, we have "Bowed Davie," as he was called, passing into the Waverley gallery as Elshie the Recluse, the Black Dwarf of Mucklestane Moor. In the 16th chapter of the novel the interview is reproduced with graphic force. Despite his misanthropic disposition, it should be said that this curious creature exhibited a quite remarkable delight in the beauties of nature; that he devoured history with avidity; and had grace enough to appreciate the great epics. He died in 1811,[1] and

[1] The Dwarf was born at Easter Happrew, in the parish of Stobo, in 1740. See Chambers's *Life of David Ritchie.*

was buried in Manor Churchyard, where the brothers Chambers, the publishers (natives of Peebles), erected a stone over his remains. Westburnflat is borrowed from Liddesdale. Ellieslaw Castle is thought to be drawn from Goldielands; according to others, from Garvald, in East Lothian. Annaple, the christian name of the old nurse at Heughfoot, was taken from that of the Dwarf's mother, Annaple Niven.

On the last day of 1817 *Rob Roy* was given to the world, Constable venturing a first edition of 10,000, which was followed within a fortnight by a further impression of 3000. A note to Ballantyne with the last proof-sheets recalls the circumstances under which the novel was written:

> "With great joy
> I send you Roy.
> 'Twas a tough job,
> But we've done with Rob."

There is more under the surface of this than mere playful humour, however, for Lockhart tells us in what shattered state of

health Scott was at the time. One fears that, notwithstanding the "light and airy" character of the composition, *Rob Roy* was little short of being task-work. "'Tis easy for you to bid me get on," the author said to Ballantyne, dunning him for copy, "but how the deuce can I make Rob Roy's wife speak with such a curmurring in my guts?" As a matter of fact, it was this year which saw the beginning of Scott's physical decline, that steady, stealing march towards the malady which finally carried him off, though, happily, not for fifteen years afterwards.

A line drawn on the map from Glasgow to Stirling and across to Inversnaid, thence by Loch Lomond back to the Clyde, will give us the Rob Roy Country, a triangle of Scotland on which the best of Scott's work had already put its impress. The Northumbrian portion of the story centres round Osbaldistone Hall, probably Biddlestone, near Rothbury, though both Chillingham and Naworth are claimants. As a characterisation of Scottish life at what may be called

the cateran period, *Rob Roy* takes high rank indeed. The contrast betwixt Scotsman and Englishman, and Highlander and Lowlander, has a better portrayal here than in any other of the Waverleys. As to originals, Di Vernon, beautiful, sprightly, dashing, without marrow among the heroines of Scott in her own class, may have been drawn, as Basil Hall supposes, from Jane Anne Cranstoun, Countess von Purgstall, Scott's early confidante; or, as seems more likely, it may have been his first love who sat for the portrait. The irresponsible Fairservice typifies the ideal serving-man of the period. The Bailie is, of course, the finest of the male characters. He is, for all time, the classic figure of the pawky Lowland merchant—hard but honest, natural and simply cynical, but kindly, good-natured, ever humorous—as true a being of flesh and blood as ever trod the "Saut Market," in the words of Leslie Stephen. Frank Osbaldistone is an ordinary, easy-going Englishman. Helen MacGregor is not an

over-attractive personality, yet what sublimity there is in the reply of this extraordinary woman to someone who called her by the familiar appellation of *good woman*! "I'm nae good woman—a' the country kens I'm bad eneugh, an' may be sorry eneugh that I am nae better; but I can do what good women canna an' darena do!"

With the next of the Waverleys, which appeared in June 1818, Scott touches high-water mark. *The Heart of Midlothian* must certainly be placed amongst the five or six of the series that stand in the front rank. As a picture of mid eighteenth-century Scottish life it is unrivalled. In Edinburgh its reception was such as Lockhart "never witnessed on the appearance of any other literary novelty," and the admiration and delight were unbounded all over Scotland. Walter Savage Landor, who had little love for Scott's poetry, says of this novel that if Scott had written nothing else, it would have stamped him the most illustrious author of the age. Its charm and power lie in the path-

etic interest of the story, which stirred the sympathy and deep respect of Scott's readers more than anything he ever wrote. Jeanie Deans is far and away the sweetest and best of his heroines of humble life, and she is so because she is the least of a heroine. The narrative on which Scott reared his romance was obtained from a Dumfries lady, Mrs Goldie of Craigmuie. Helen Walker, Jeanie's prototype, tramped all the way to London, and with the assistance of the Duke of Argyll saved her sister Isabel ("Effie Deans"), lying under sentence of death for infanticide, having previously refused (though the official record does not suggest this) to preserve the other's life by giving false testimony. Unlike her prototype, however, Helen died (in her eightieth year) poor and unmarried, without any of that generous provision which the Duke bestowed upon his fictitious protégée. Mrs Goldie planned a monument to her memory, but passed away before this could be set up. Her daughter subsequently requested Scott

to write the inscription, and offered to collect money to carry out her mother's wish. Sir Walter replied that he would do it all himself. Accordingly, a handsome table-stone (not a "little pillar," as Lockhart has it), in the Covenanting churchyard of Irongray, carries this most graceful of tributes:

THIS STONE WAS ERECTED
BY THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY
TO THE MEMORY
OF
HELEN WALKER,
WHO DIED IN THE YEAR OF GOD 1791

THIS HUMBLE INDIVIDUAL
PRACTISED IN REAL LIFE
THE VIRTUES
WITH WHICH FICTION HAS INVESTED
THE IMAGINARY CHARACTER OF
JEANIE DEANS;
REFUSING THE SLIGHTEST DEPARTURE
FROM VERACITY,
EVEN TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A SISTER,
SHE NEVERTHELESS SHOWED HER
KINDNESS AND FORTITUDE,
IN RESCUING HER
FROM THE SEVERITY OF THE LAW,
AT THE EXPENSE OF PERSONAL EXERTIONS
WHICH THE TIME RENDERED AS DIFFICULT
AS THE MOTIVE WAS LAUDABLE.

RESPECT THE GRAVE OF POVERTY
WHEN COMBINED WITH LOVE OF TRUTH
AND DEAR AFFECTION.

Though many of the incidents in *The Heart of Midlothian* occur in widely-separated localities, Edinburgh, as the title shows, is its principal arena. It is peculiarly Scott's story of his "own romantic town." No artist lingers more lovingly over his canvas than Scott over his Edinburgh word-pictures. The Grassmarket, the site of the Tolbooth, Muschat's Cairn—the scene of Jeanie's and Robertson's midnight meeting—St Anthony's Chapel (a mere shell), Salisbury Crags, in the neighbourhood of which lay the Deans's homestead, and Arthur's Seat—"a lion *couchant*"—all these were the cherished landmarks of Scott's golden days. There is no finer reverie than that with which the eighth chapter opens; but every chapter, to speak truth, affords fresh glimpses of the "fascination" (the word used by another Sir Walter with regard to London) by which the whole setting of the city and the continuity of its history had "chained his heart for evermair."

Lockhart considers the publication of this

novel as the climax of Scott's career. But *Ivanhoe* and *Kenilworth*; *The Fortunes of Nigel* and *Quentin Durward*; as well as *Redgauntlet*, were still to be written—a noble quintette! Nevertheless, just at this time it looked as if the romancer's writing days were done. For several months during 1819 Scott lay in Castle Street at death's door—so certain of his end, indeed, that on one occasion he actually took farewell of his family, and Lockhart parted from him "with dark prognostications" that it was for the last time. But his characteristically vigorous constitution carried him through the crisis, though his hair turned snow-white, and he was never quite the same man again.

What have been termed the "sick man's romances" bring us, first of all, to the Border with that finest of tragic tales, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, whose scenes are almost entirely laid in East Lothian and the Merse. The story, however, turns on a well-known Wigtownshire tradition, connected

with the Stair family,—Janet Dalrymple, wife of David Dunbar, Younger of Baldoon, being the original of the gentle Lucy Ashton.[1] The Wolf's Crag is the fragmentary Fast Castle, while Eyemouth is the Wolf's Hope, the scene of Caleb Balderstone's raiding exploits. The latter, modelled from Andrew Davidson of Tyninghame, is a second Fairservice. "Haud yer tongue, for heaven's sake, sir; if it's my pleasure to hazard my soul in telling lees for the hon-

[1] The tradition of the Bride has been greatly exaggerated. The real facts seem to be these: Janet Dalrymple had pledged her troth to a poor noble, Lord Rutherford, whose suit was resented by her parents. The mother, the wife of the first Lord Stair, the original of Lady Ashton therefore, a proud woman of strong will, exerted all her influence to break off this engagement, and succeeded. Thereupon Janet married Dunbar, August 12, 1669. On the 24th of that month, both bride and bridegroom returned to Baldoon, in the parish of Kirkinner. Shortly afterwards, the bride's health declined and gave way, and she died, probably of a broken heart, on September 12th following. There is not the faintest allusion to any such harrowing catastrophe as that supposed in the novel to have occurred on the night of the marriage. Dunbar, "a cultivated gentleman of unimpeached honour," bore no resemblance to "Bucklaw." He again married, and died in 1682. The marriage contract of David Dunbar and Janet Dalrymple is still extant.

our of the family, it's nae business o' yours." Winton House is thought to be the Ravenswood of the tragedy, and the fine old kirk of Pencaitland may easily be the scene of the wedding and burial of the ill-fated Bride.

In *The Legend of Montrose*, which formed the second portion of the third series of the *Tales of My Landlord*, we are taken to familiar Highland territory. It is the great Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, that most conceited of wandering Scots, that dauntless soldier of fortune, who really shines in the story. It is consequently a story of a single man only. It may be recalled that Scott got the name as a boy at Prestonpans.

The grand old English romance of *Ivanhoe* appeared in December 1819, "in the midst of accumulated afflictions." Scott was then in the gloom of solitude, under a deep cloud of sorrow. In this month, within ten days, he lost his mother, an uncle, and an aunt. *Ivanhoe* was received with

positive rapture, and in England it is no exaggeration to say that it was welcomed as a national triumph. As a work of art, it is easily the first of all Scott's efforts. Not so, however, from the standpoint of genius. Considered thus, it is a long way behind the first three of the Waverleys. The original of Rebecca of York, it is not generally known, was Miss Gratz, a Philadelphian, of whose beauty and tenderness, and loyalty to her ancient faith, Scott heard from Washington Irving. "How do you like your Rebecca? Does the Rebecca I have pictured compare with the pattern given?" he inquired of Irving, in sending him a copy of *Ivanhoe.*

The Monastery (1820) is Scott's solitary romance of the Melrose district. One feels that he missed his chance. Abundant material lay to his hand, had he cared—better themes than the Romish Church at her last gasp. In *The Lay*, Melrose comes to its own, to be sure; yet the opportunity for a really great and artistic presentation

of its finer features and traditions was lost altogether. In Saint Mary's of Kennaquhair we have the venerable religious house, amongst whose ruins the laird of Abbotsford spent many happy hours. Glendearg (formerly Hillslap) and Colmslie, with a third tower, Langshaw, are at the head of the Water of Elwyn, and near its junction with the Tweed is the Fairy or Nameless Dean—Corri-nan-shian—the resort of that most ridiculous personage, the White Lady. Darnick comes into the story, and at Bridgend, close by, is the scene of the sousing of the sacristan, Father Philip. Castle Avenel may be Lochside, at Yetholm, or Sandyknowe itself. Clinthill is in Mertoun parish. The surnames of Happer, Glendinning, Brydone, and Tackit are still common to the localities of the novel. Captain Clutterbuck, who is made to introduce *The Monastery*, was, according to Robert Chambers (though Scott denies it), Adam Ormiston, a Melrose "worthy," who really did know a good deal about the Ab-

bey. Mine host of the George, in the opening narrative, was David Kyle, and Captain Doolittle was Walter Tait of the Royal Marines, a one-legged hero who died in 1836.

The Abbot, suggested to Scott during a visit to Blair-Adam, appeared as a sequel to *The Monastery* in September 1820, and fared better with the public, who, be it said, were not welcoming the novels after *Ivanhoe* with the same enthusiastic delight. Kinross and Loch Leven are its chief scenes, and it has Queen Mary for its principal figure. "They may say what they will—many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stuart, e'en if all be true men say of her." These words, which Scott puts into the mouth of one of his characters, well express his own feelings and those of many a man and woman since his day. *Kenilworth*, a romance of Queen Elizabeth, followed in January. It was one of the most successful of all at the time of publication, and must continue to keep its place in the high-

est rank of prose fiction. Nor, with the one exception of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of Amy Robsart. The next of the series, *The Pirate*, was published in the beginning of December 1821. When with the Lighthouse Commissioners, immediately after the publication of *Waverley*, Scott had gone over practically the whole ground covered by the romance—the Mainland of Shetland. He had climbed Sumburgh Head, where Mertoun rescues Cleveland, cast on the beach. He had visited Mousa Castle, from which he drew the picture of Norna's eyrie, where she compounded the charm to cure Minna's heartache. He had inspected the Stones of Hoy and Stennis, where the Pirate makes his farewell to Minna. There is, indeed, not one of the novels in which the locality and its life have been so faithfully limned. Minna and Brenda Troil had for their prototypes the two winsome daughters, blonde and brune, of Scott of

Deloraine, in Ettrick.[1] *The Fortunes of Nigel* —a London-Scottish romance, the most vivacious of the Waverleys; *Peveril of the Peak*, dull, since "smelling of the apoplexy"; *Quentin Durward*, a distinctly noble contribution to the historical novel, and the best in construction of the whole series, were each bargained for and "billed" ere a line was written. So were *St Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet*. The first three transport us furth of Scotland and to mediæval times. With the last two we are at home and in the modern world. It is curious to note about *Nigel* that all its chief characters from the King to the hero's servant are Scots. James, and Richie Moniplies, are the figures that attract us most, though we should perhaps add that of George Heriot—"Jingling Geordie." Dalgarno makes a poor enough show. So does Sir Mungo Malagrowther, believed to be

[1] The claim is also made, not without reason, for the two daughters of Roy of Nenthorn, nea. Kelso, at whose house Scott used to visit; and also for the nieces of Morritt of Rokeby.

drawn from Kirkpatrick Sharpe. John Christie and his frail spouse are sketched to the life. Topographically, Scott's London is singularly correct, though Hyde Park is made to exist half a century before its time.

Quentin Durward, a huge Continental success, was the first book by Scott in which the scene is laid out of the British Isles. To Skene he was indebted for most of his local colour, but there are incidents and reminiscences which savour of Scotland and the writer's own experiences. *St Ronan's Well* is the Wizard's one story of contemporary social life, and far from brilliant. As Scott, Laidlaw, and Lockhart were riding along the brow of the Eildons, Scott mentioned the "row" that was going on in Paris about *Quentin Durward*. "I can't but think I could make better play still with something German," he said. Laidlaw mildly protested. "You are," he said, "always best, like Helen MacGregor, when your foot is on your native heath; and I

have often thought that if you were to write a novel and lay the scene *here* in the very year you were writing it, you would exceed yourself." "Hame's hame," quoth Scott, smiling, "be it ever sae hamely"; and Laidlaw bade him "stick to Melrose in 1823." Alas, however, the scene was not Melrose! Would it had been! Strange that again the chance escaped him. The conversation doubtless suggested *St Ronan's Well*, the locale of which Innerleithen claims for itself, though much of the scenery was probably drawn from Gilsland. Marchthorn may be Peebles (the Earl of March, now Wemyss, being one of its chief landowners); and here dwelt Miss Ritchie, the true original of Meg Dods, the termagant landlady of the Cleikum Inn, which is still in existence. Shaw's Castle may be Traquair House, but the name is suggestive of Gilsland. Dr Duncan of Smailholm stood, so Lockhart says, for the absent-minded Josiah Cargill; but Dr Lawson of Selkirk is a no less likely original.

When *Redgauntlet* came, it proved an

excellent foil to *St Ronan's Well*. But it was destined to be the last of the front-rank romances. Historically, in its Jacobite temper, it may be said to stand next to *Waverley*—is pendent to it, indeed. The scene of action is confined to Edinburgh and the Solway shores, where, however, no actual rising on behalf of Charles Edward ever took shape. Redgauntlet Castle is, no doubt, designed from Hoddom Castle, which, from its situation in Cummertrees parish, suggests at once the papistical laird of Summertrees—"Pate-in-Peril." His rather risky adventure at the Devil's Beef Tub evidences Scott's familiarity with the old coach-road between the Crook and Moffat. Joshua and Rachel Geddes (Ruskin's perfect type of womanhood) were borrowed from what Scott saw, in his Kelso boyhood, of the Waldies. Darsie Latimer is Scott's friend Will Clerk; and the Fairfords are, of course, Walter Scott *père et fils*. Lockhart is surely wrong in seeing in the faithful Purdie a prototype of the villainous Cristal

Nixon. Nanty Ewart, the scholarly smuggler, looks like a model of Paul Jones. The terrible Sir Robert Redgauntlet, in that masterpiece, "Wandering Willie's Tale," the finest short story in the English language, is Grierson of Lag with a snatch of Claverhouse. For Wandering Willie there is no suggested original, but it is in Dunscore old churchyard (where Lag lies) that his weird narration has its finis. Among the novels of Scott, *Redgauntlet* will always be reckoned one of the dearest, especially to those who love to trace, through his fiction, the hand as well as the spirit of the Master. It is the memory of his first love, first friendship, filial affection, and first experience of the world, that lights up so much of the book. Whether it be considered as a story, which for variety and excellence of character has never been excelled, as Mr Lang thinks, save by Shakespeare, or taken as a piece of splendidly interesting introspective, its niche in the temple of Waverley is for ever secure.

The remainder of the Waverleys take us to far fields. In 1825 appeared *The Betrothed*, a Welsh story—not a success. See the Introduction for an interesting legend as to the origin of the Peeblesshire Tweedies. *The Talisman* (1825), a tale of the Third Crusade, derives its title from the famous Lee Penny obtained in the Holy Land by Lockhart of Lee, in Lanarkshire. The amulet is still preserved—a treasured family heirloom.

We are now at the dark year of Scott's life, with ruin, and the supreme sorrow, of which the critics have made too little, and the loss of "dear 39," following each other in swift, pathetic succession. Then what seemed to be the beginning of the end itself. It was on January 17, 1826, that Skene, calling at Castle Street, found Scott addressing him: "My friend, give me a shake of your hand—mine is that of a beggar. Constable has failed, and I am ruined *de fond en comble*. It's a hard blow, but I must just bear up; the only thing which

wrings me is poor Charlotte and the bairns." On May 14, "poor Charlotte" had passed "beyond these voices." There were "ominous reminders," too, that all was not right with his own health. Yet were there herculean tasks ahead! And how heroically were they wrestled with to the overcoming! *Woodstock* won him a round £8000, the *Life of Napoleon* brought grist to the mill to the extent of £18,000. By and by we see him planning the *Tales of a Grandfather*, which one fears the children of Scotland are in danger of forgetting; and *The Chronicles of the Canongate*, a set of stories from the hypothetical pen of Chrystal Croftangry, "a reduced gentleman," like Caleb Balderstone, who had run through a fortune, and lived his last days near by the Canongate in comfortable proximity to the Holyrood Sanctuary. In the person of Croftangry, Scott gives his readers a someways portrait of himself. Of the Tales, there is *The Highland Widow*, a tragedy of the Awe, inspired by Mrs Bethune Baliol,

drawn from Scott's friend Mrs Murray Keith; *The Two Drovers*, a dirking catastrophe which takes place in Cumberland; and *The Surgeon's Daughter*, whose scenes are laid first at Selkirk, the Middlemas of the story, and afterwards in India. Dr Gideon Gray is either Mungo Park, or Ebenezer Clarkson, Scott's own chirurgeon.

Of three other short *contes* from *The Keepsake* (1829), *My Aunt Margaret's Mirror*, a Flanders episode, is the best; *Death of the Laird's Jock* embodies a legend of Liddesdale; and *The Tapestried Chamber* is a conventional West of England ghost story.

Among the final considerable Waverleys was *The Fair Maid of Perth; or, St Valentine's Day*, in which for the last time we are taken to the Highlands and the "murmuring banks of Tay." Interest centres chiefly in the historic combat on the North Inch and the stupendous heroism of Hal o' the Wynd. The Fair Maid's House is still one of the "lions" of the ancient Scottish Capital. Following *Anne of Geierstein*, a sort of

sequel to *Quentin Durward*, and *Count Robert of Paris*, a tale of Byzantine history, *Castle Dangerous* brings the brilliant procession to a close. With characteristic bravado, we have Scott accompanied by Lockhart setting out in July for Douglasdale, the scene of the new romance. Past all the old landmarks, every one of them precious to his memory, we see them driving, as Scott well knew, for the last time. They ascended the Tweed, by Yair, Ashestiel, Elibank, Innerleithen, and Peebles, as far as the town of Biggar. When near Drochil, a Douglas holding, and somewhat off the main track, Scott could scarcely be constrained from making an effort to reach it. At Douglas he inspected the old Castle, St Bride's Kirk, and the very extraordinary monuments of the most heroic and powerful family in the annals of Scotland—now the savers, now the betrayers of their country.

The meeting (too joyous, one fears) with an old friend, Eliott Lockhart of Cleghorn

and Borthwickbrae (long M.P. for Selkirkshire), had disastrous effects for the latter, himself a paralytic. "When they met," says Lockhart, "each saw his own case glassed in the other, and neither of their manly hearts could well contain itself as they embraced. Each exerted himself to the utmost, indeed far too much, and they were both tempted to transgress the laws of their physician." The result was a fresh shock to the older invalid, who now lay stricken and despaired of. "This is a sad warning," said Scott, when the news came to him. "I must home to work while it is called to-day; for the night cometh when no man can work. I put that text many a year ago on my dial-stone; but it often preached in vain." Alas, even then the shadows were thickening around him! The tired pen was to do little more. A few months and its "work" would be over! Of confessions by men of letters, has there ever been any more stately, more noble, than this that fell from the lips of the "Author of Waverley"? "I am draw-

ing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been, perhaps, the most voluminous author of the day: and it *is* a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principle, and that I have written nothing which on my death-bed I should wish blotted."

CHAPTER VI

"FAIR MELROSE"

LOCKHART has an attractive and homely picture of the walk which Scott and Moore took together from Abbotsford to Melrose. On the way, they called on Laidlaw at Kaeside, and on the Fergusons at Huntlyburn, visits which greatly charmed the author of *Lalla Rookh*. At Melrose, Scott explained to his companion "all the parts of the ruin," and had his usual banter with the custodian, Johnny Bower. Sir Walter's love for Melrose and its Abbey is known to all readers of the Life. The place is at the very heart of the Scott homeland. No part of the Border is better known, not only in Scotland itself, but in far fields, and wherever the English language is spoken. The situation of Melrose (anciently Fordel), in the long, hill-girt hollow through which

runs the Tweed in pleasant babble, and under the shadow of the "Eildons, one yet three," has much to commend it. Topographically, Melrose may easily have become a popular resort, apart from its literary and romantic associations. But Scott is the true maker of the modern Melrose. It was the writing of *The Lay* and *The Monastery*, together with the warm, personal element furnished by the near neighbourhood of Abbotsford, which laid the foundation whereon Melrose has reared its fortunes. The town flourishes on the genius of Scott. A century ago it was obscure enough, despite its possession of what Lockhart has styled "the most graceful and picturesque monastic ruin in Scotland." In 1801 the population was between four and five hundred. At the time of Scott's death, its inhabitants numbered six hundred and eighty-nine. Twenty years later they were still less than a thousand; now they are about two thousand. When Scott began to build Abbotsford, slated houses were un-

known in Melrose. The parish church was part of the Abbey nave, and the St John's Lodge of Freemasons (the oldest in Scotland) occupied the only other public building in the place.

Melrose dates its expansion and its prosperity almost entirely from the era of Scott. It has become a sort of Borderland Mecca, where homage is paid from all points of the compass to one who was "the whole world's darling." No town, with the exceptions of Stratford-on-Avon and Ayr, has been dowered with such wealth of literary traditions; and no ruin, unless it be "Alloway's auld haunted kirk," has been so enshrined in the poetical annals of the nation as Melrose Abbey has. *The Lay* is the inseparable and imperishable memory of Melrose. It is not the busy, useful life of that early Cistercian colony which one thinks of in the sunny, grass-grown nave of Melrose; nor is it a remembrance of the dead who have "given their bodies to this holy Abbey to keep"; neither is it sorrow for

the fire and sword from over the Border. One thinks rather of William of Deloraine —the monk—the open tomb of the wizard —the bewitching effect of the "pale moonlight," as pictured so exquisitely in the second canto. It is difficult to imagine Melrose without the influence of Scott. The revival of a taste for Gothic architecture in the early part of last century did much, doubtless, to foster interest in the ruin, yet how little and how feeble was it all in comparison with the universal attention which the Wizard of Tweedside has attracted to the pile! The tourist inundations which Melrose witnesses summer after summer care little for the Abbey as such. It is the magnetism of *The Lay* that makes all the difference.

This, however, was not Scott's sole boon to Melrose—to repeople it with the supersensible and the awesome. How lovingly did he care for the picturesque pile and watch over it! How did he plan and plead on its behalf! Take, for instance, the follow-

ing paragraph from the Life: "About this time [1822] Scott's thoughts were much occupied with a plan for securing Melrose Abbey against the progress of decay, which had been making itself manifest to an alarming extent, and to which he had often before directed the attention of the Buccleuch family. Even in writing to persons who had never seen Melrose, he could not keep from touching on this business, for he wrote, as he spoke, out of the fulness of his heart. The young Duke readily concurred with his guardian in allowing the poet to direct such repairs as might seem to him adequate, and the result was extremely satisfactory to all the habitual worshippers of those classical ruins."

What the fabric owes to Scott is not sufficiently known. Only for him, one fears that the structure might have been in very different circumstances from what it is. Even yet does it merit the most anxious attention (this may be said of all the Border Abbeys); but the fact that the owner of

Melrose is still a Duke of Buccleuch is assurance enough that its safety and amenity are in good hands.

Melrose, like its sister fanes, owes its establishment to David, the "Sair Sanct." The name was borrowed from that earlier Columban house, two miles further down the Tweed, opposite Bemersyde, and not far from Dryburgh, the site of which is now known as Old Melrose (from *Maol-ros*, the open or naked headland). Colonised by monks from Lindisfarne, it was at the height of its glory under the priorship of Cuthbert, who was himself a native of the locality. Falling on evil times towards the end of the ninth century, it gradually lost prestige, and became finally extinct as the new Melrose rose in renown.

The history of Melrose is virtually that of each of those other splendid homes of piety whose remains, sad in their shattered beauty, still grace the banks of the Tweed and the Jed.[1] A period of little more than

[1] Chronologically, Jedburgh, founded in 1118, is the old-

four hundred years covers their entire life, notwithstanding the rare devotion and the princely benefactions lavished upon them. They came through much tribulation during the War of Independence, Melrose being totally destroyed then, and rebuilt by the munificence of Robert the Bruce. They were burned and pillaged by the "auld enemy" in 1523, and again at other times; and it was reserved for Hertford and his underlings, agents of the most despicable of English monarchs — Henry VIII. — to complete, in 1544–5, the work of demolition.

The ruins stand pretty much as their last desecrators left them. There is no need to rail at the Reformers or at Cromwell for supposed acts of spoliation. They were saved the work, if they had had the will to do it. All *that* was done fifteen years before

est. Kelso comes next, some ten years later. Melrose dates from 1136, and Dryburgh was not begun until 1150. The first three are in Roxburghshire; the last stands in a corner of Berwickshire, bounded by the "chiming Tweed." It should be stated that Hugh de Morville, Lord of Lauderdale and Constable of Scotland, had a considerable share in the founding of Dryburgh.

JEDBURGH ABBEY

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"A thousand and a hundyre yhere,
And awchtene to rekyne clere,
Gedward and Kelsowe Abbayis twa
Or Davy was King he founded tha."

"The sacred tapers' lights are gone,
Grey moss has clad the altar stone,
The holy image is o'erthrown,
The bell has ceased to toll;
The long ribb'd aisles are burst and shrunk,
The holy shrines to ruin sunk,
Departed is the pious monk—
God's blessing on his soul!"

SCOTT.

the Reformation, and fifty-four years before Cromwell was born. Only one healing influence has been at work since those September days which first saw them reduced from the perfection of symmetry and beauty to blackened walls. Time has dealt softly and gently with them, as the rich carving at Melrose abundantly shows; dotting them with the growths that cling to ancient ruins, and over all throwing the tender pathos of decay.

That Melrose should have fired the imagination of Scott was inevitable. No one knew the ruin so intimately. Next to Abbotsford, Melrose was his favourite haunt. Here he brought most of his visitors. And happy they who had Scott for cicerone! "He'll come here sometimes," said old Bower, "with great folks in his company, and the first I'll know of it is hearing his voice calling out, 'Johnny!—Johnny Bower!' and when I go out, I'm sure to be greeted with a joke or a pleasant word. He'll stand and crack and laugh wi' me just like an auld

wife—and to think that of a man that has such an awfu' knowledge o' history!" Lockhart saw the ruin for the first time in 1818, and was charmed with Scott's descriptions, both of Melrose and Dryburgh. An inquiry as to the revenue of the former at its heyday, drew from Scott the answer that he calculated it could hardly be less than £100,000 yearly. Little wonder he makes Captain Clutterbuck say of those old Cistercians that they "had an easy life of it"! He was not unmindful, mayhap, of the taunt:

> "The monks of Melrose made fat kail
> On Fridays when they fasted;
> Nor wanted they gude beef and ale,
> So lang's their neighbours' lasted."

Melrose Abbey has been so often described that minute details are unnecessary, even if space availed for such details. The fabric, as with Abbotsford, must be seen to be understood by those who revel in grand architectural designs and rich fanciful decorations. Like all ancient churches it is cruciform, in this instance a Latin cross. From

the centre rises a square tower, eighty-four feet high, of which only the west side remains, resting on a lofty pointed arch whose summit terminated in a stone balustrade with quatrefoil rails, under which appears in bas-relief a frieze of roses.[1] The west end of the nave has entirely disappeared, so that the length of that portion of the building cannot be ascertained. From the extremity of the existing edifice to the end of the chancel the measurement is 258 feet, the length of the transept 130 feet, and the breadth of the nave 79 feet within the walls. The most complete parts of the ruin are the south transept door and window, both in the finest style of the Decorated period, the window, indeed, being one of the most beautiful in Britain. The north transept is roofless. One of its windows represents a Crown of Thorns. On the west side, in

[1] The rose is everywhere in evidence. It was the Abbots' favourite flower, and held to be emblematic of the locality. Figures of a mason's mallet (Scotticé, a *mell*) and a *rose* are frequent. The rebus is incorporated into the arms of the burgh. See the Mercat-Cross, and several of the public buildings.

two elevated niches, are statues of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Beneath is a door of Saxon architecture leading into a low vaulted apartment—the Sacristy probably, but traditionally known as the Wax Cellar. A small door on the west side of the south transept, which displays a portion of the original ribbed and groined roof, opens to a staircase winding to the top by seventy-four steps, and leading to galleries which doubtless communicated with all parts of the building. Above this door is a carved shield with compasses and fleurs-de-lys, and the legend, now indecipherable,

> Sa gays ye cumpas evyn about
> Sa trouth and laute do but duite
> Behald to ye hende q. Johne Morow.[1]

Who this Morow was, and what was his connection with Melrose, is seen from the inscription upon another tablet a little to

[1] Some words are apparently missing. The idea is that as the compass goes round with a uniform exactness, so is it with Truth. The remainder of the inscription is not unlikely to be an expression of praise (*laute*) for the termination of the work carried out under the superintendence of Morow, who was a mediæval architect of note, and a Frenchman.

the left. This, which has nearly always been copied incorrectly, is arranged as follows, without any date:

John : Morow : sumtyme : callit :
Was : I : and : born : in : Paryssе :
Certainly : and : had : in keping
All : mason : werk : of : Santan :
Drugs : ye : hye : kirk : of : Glas
Gw : Melros : and : Pasley : of :
Nyddysdayll : and : of : Galway :
✠Pray : to : God : and : Mari : baith :
And sweet : sanct : John : to : keep : this : haly : kirk :
fra : skaith.

But the Abbey's finest feature, as is well known, is the east oriel, rendered so famous by *The Lay*. It is fortunately entire, and whether viewed from without or within, at noon or "by the pale moonlight," it is marvellously corroborative of the high praise Scott has bestowed upon it. Attention may also be drawn to the original roof covering the east end of the chancel; to Deloraine's doorway (the "steel-clenched postern" of the poem) leading from the cloisters; and to the exquisite carving of the stalls, which Lockhart declares to be

"unrivalled by anything elsewhere extant, I do not say in Gothic architecture merely, but in any architecture whatever. Roses and lilies, and thistles, and ferns and heaths, in all their varieties, and oak leaves and ash leaves, and a thousand beautiful shapes besides, are chiselled with such inimitable truth and such grace of nature, that the finest botanist in the world could not desire a better *hortus siccus*, so far as they go." Note should be taken of the prominence given throughout the sculpture to the curly green, or common garden kail, all as delicately executed as the natural leaf.

But, as has been said, mere description counts for little in dealing with such a subject. What must one say of the exterior with its numberless niches and canopies, with its wealth of ornamentation, the most diverse, the most strange imaginable, from representations of the royal founder himself, and his queen, to such a wildly grotesque figure as that of a pig playing the bagpipe, or the scores of gaping gargoyles,

which are said to symbolize the misery of the impenitent, and of those who are cast out of the church! For variety and splendour of workmanship, not in one detail, but throughout all the structure, Melrose exhibits probably the finest example of mediæval Gothic which Britain can boast of.

Some of the inscriptions, in addition to those quoted, are interesting and touching:

THE DUST OF MANY GENERATIONS OF THE BOSTONS OF GATTONSIDE IS DEPOSITED IN THIS PLACE. WE GIVE OUR BODIES TO THIS HOLY ABBEY TO KEEP.

ORATE PRO ANIMA FRATRIS PETRI AERARII [PRAY FOR THE SOUL OF BROTHER PETER THE TREASURER].

HEIR LYIS THE RACE OF YE HOVS OF ZAIR [YAIR].

HIC JACET JOHANNA D. ROSS.

The subject of the last-quoted inscription was Queen of Alexander II.,—Alexander himself being interred by the High Altar, where also reposes the Heart of Bruce; the hero of Otterburn, and others of his race. Buried just outside the Chancel (though this is mere conjecture) are the

English commanders who fell at Ancrum Moor[1]; while the adjoining slab (according to *The Lay*) covers the most notable personage laid within those walls—

> "The wondrous Michael Scot,
> A Wizard of such dreaded fame,
> That when in Salamanca's cave
> Him listed his magic wand to wave,
> The bells would ring in Notre-Dame!"

This Michael, who lived in the 13th century, contemporary with Roger Bacon, earned, like Bacon, the character of a magician by his learning and research. It was he who (as tradition tells) cleft the Eildon Hills in three; who bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone [at Kelso]; who set his familiar the hopeless task of spinning ropes from the sands of Berwick Bar.

Several stones in the churchyard call for

[1] It was Evers and Latoun who defaced the Douglas monuments, and otherwise despoiled the Abbey. There is no positive proof that they were permitted shelter here, even in death. Is it necessary to add that the grave of Michael Scot is purely imaginary? Sir Walter was not thinking of any particular place of sepulture when he wrote *The Lay*. Bower was the first to centre attention on what now goes by the appellation of the Wizard's Tomb.

notice. In the ministers' ground is the "throuch" of John Knox, grand-nephew of the Reformer, who served the cure of Melrose from 1584 to 1623.

A small red stone (lately restored) bears these pregnant lines, so often upon the lips of Scott. "I can never forget the awe-striking solemnity with which he pronounced them," wrote the widow of John Ballantyne in her Reminiscences:

> "The earth goeth on the earth
> Glist'ring like gold;
> The earth goes to the earth
> Sooner than it wold;
> The earth builds on the earth
> Castles and towers;
> The earth says to the earth
> All shall be ours."

Then we shall want to look at the grave of Tom Purdie, from which point also the Abbey appears at its best. In the literature of epitaphs there is no more beautiful inscription than that penned by Scott:

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF
THE FAITHFUL
AND ATTACHED SERVICES
OF
TWENTY-TWO YEARS
AND IN SORROW
FOR THE LOSS OF A HUMBLE
BUT SINCERE FRIEND
THIS STONE WAS ERECTED
BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,
OF ABBOTSFORD.

HERE LIES THE BODY
OF
THOMAS PURDIE
WOOD-FORESTER
AT ABBOTSFORD
WHO DIED 29 OCTOBER
1829
AGED SIXTY-TWO YEARS.

"Thou hast been faithful
Over a few things,
I will make thee ruler
Over many things."

A third stone keeps green the memory of the Christian philosopher, Sir David Brewster, the acknowledged master of optics in

his time, for whom the text (self-chosen) has sweet significance, "THE LORD IS MY LIGHT."

Melrose Cross, dated 1642 (a restoration), should be noted in the centre of the town, and it is worth while to walk as far as the Parish Church, from the back of which there is a specially fine landscape of the Tweed, with its wooded banks, and the orchard village of Gattonside, a relic of monkish days.

Melrose was the only place of which Scott took a formal farewell before his death. The incident is narrated in the *Abbotsford Notanda* of Robert Carruthers: "One morning Laidlaw's family were startled to see Sir Walter approaching Kaeside, feeble, and wearing his nightcap, which apparently he had forgotten to exchange for a hat. No notice was taken of the circumstance. After the usual kindly salutations, he said, with a tremulous voice, that he had come to take a last look at the Abbey. He proceeded to an elevated point commanding a view of the spot, and after gazing long and anxious-

ly down on the town and Abbey, he said slowly, 'It is a venerable ruin!' and returned to Abbotsford." And it is what it is almost entirely because of his Magician's hand. While it is *The Lay* that has cast the most potent spell over Melrose Abbey, one cannot be dull to the visions and the voices called into being in the pages of *The Monastery* and *The Abbot.* There long-lost golden days return. We see a reanimated Melrose. We listen to the music of far-away centuries,—the joyous chime, the dolorous plaint, the festival chorus, the hymn for the dead! So may one dream in the deserted aisles of "fair Melrose." To-day all is hushed and still where holy men have trod; where monarchs have met for comfort and counsel at great crises of their history. Outside, the world of Nature has changed but little. Still "distant Tweed is heard to rave" in its wintry floods, or to chant its spring-tide benison. But the men who knew Melrose; who gazed upon this temple in its first peerless beauty; who

MELROSE ABBEY

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"Anno Milleno, centeno, ter quoque deno
Et sexto Christi, Melrose fundata fuisti.'

"The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combin'd;
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twin'd;
Then fram'd a spell, when the work was done,
And chang'd the willow-wreaths to stone."

SCOTT.

reared its shapely pillars, its faultless arches, its traceried windows; whose skill will look out for many a day from corbel, and shaft, and capital, are no longer responsive to such sights and sounds as graced their brief hour of earth-born felicity. A new race wanders aimlessly through the ancient ways. In summer, the rapture of the birds makes pleasant minstrelsy. Through nights dark and long, the wind sings ghostly requiem.

To trace Scott's footsteps within what may be called the Melrose radius, will not be out of place in the present chapter. There is the Leader valley, with Earlston (anciently Ercildoune), a haunt of Sir Walter, which furnished him with one of his best *Minstrelsy* ballads; and above all, with that old-world figure of the Rhymer, in whom his interest never flagged from boyhood. That the metrical romance of *Sir Tristrem* was the original work of Thomas the Rhymer, Scott did not hesitate to affirm. This he sought to prove in a singularly crudite

essay prefacing his edition of the tale published in 1804, from the Auchinleck MS. in the Advocates' Library. While the majority of critics do not accept Scott's view, it is refreshing to find his claims in Thomas's behalf supported no less vigorously by a present-day student of the subject (see M'Neill's *Sir Tristrem* in Scottish Text Society's Series, 1886). That the Rhymer's connection with the story is not first-hand is clear from the fact that *Sir Tristrem* was known throughout Europe at least a century before Thomas's time. The suggestion, however, that it was he who gave it shape in good Scots is reasonable enough. Like Michael Scot, and Merlin, legend has invested the Rhymer with the most remarkable powers, chiefly prophetical, and up to the middle of the eighteenth century his place as the *vates sacer* of the people was unquestioned. Reputed sayings of his are to be found in all parts of the land, and the ballad of *Thomas the Rhymer*, in which many of these are embodied, together with

Scott's own version, detailing the tradition of the Seer's disappearance, constitutes a curious study in the credulity of an age so tinged with the superstitious.

Earlston is naturally song-haunted, as befits the birthplace of one who has been styled "the day-starre of Scottish poetry." At Mellerstain, within the parish, is the grave of Grisell Baillie, the Polwarth girl-heroine, and writer of the pathetic lyric, which Scott was so fond of reciting, *Werena my Heart licht I wad die.* And who has not heard of Cowdenknowes, where happy maids and men have trysted since time was?

"Oh, the broom, the bonnie, bonnie broom!
The broom o' the Cowdenknowes!
I wish I were with my dear swain,
With his pipe and my yowes!"

Of this song there are no fewer than half-a-dozen versions, and the amorous ballad on which all of them are based Scott captured for the *Minstrelsy.* At Bemersyde, overlooking a bold bluff of the Tweed, and immediately opposite the beautiful bend

on which stood the original Melrose, the scene of Aidan's, and Boisil's, and Cuthbert's ministrations, Scott spent many joyous hours with the Haigs, his last visit being with Turner, the painter, in 1831. There seemed to him "almost a wizard spell" hanging over Bemersyde, he said, recounting the prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer, in which in his young days he most potently believed:

> "Tyde what may betyde,
> Haig shall be Haig of Bemersyde."

It was the eccentric Earl of Buchan, a prince of bores, the same who planned Scott's funeral at the 1818 crisis, who reared the red Wallace colossus holding solitary empire on the brow of a precipitous bank facing the Tweed, between Bemersyde and Dryburgh. At Mertoun House, Scott wrote the *Eve of St John*, learned German, and conversed with a lady who knew Pope and the wits of Queen Anne's time. Lessudden House, the seat of the Scotts of Raeburn (Sir Walter's branch); Littledean,

recalling the notorious "Deil" of that ilk, a memory of Scott's childhood mentioned in the Ashestiel fragment; Makerstoun, a Makdougall domain; and Sandyknowe itself, are all in the near neighbourhood.

But Scott's footsteps are not to be traced within only one particular district of the Border. There is scarcely a spot, indeed, that does not claim some connection with him. It was at Jedburgh that he made his first appearance as a criminal counsel, pleading successfully for his client, a noted poacher. "You're a lucky scoundrel," Scott whispered to him when the verdict had been given. "I'm just o' your mind," was the reply, "and I'll send you a maukin [a hare] the morn, man!" Selkirk was the scene of his later legal life. It was the centre of his Sheriffdom, and the key to the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys, names constantly upon his lips, and redolent of reminiscences the most pleasurable in a career not always *sans souci*. In the latter valley he gathered not a few gems for the *Minstrelsy*. Here Philip-

haugh and Hangingshaw, Lewinshope and Tinnis, remind us of the *Sang of the Outlaw Murray*. At Newark, *The Lay* was recited. "Sweet Bowhill," the fountain of its inspiration, is a field-breadth or two off. At Foulshiels, Mungo Park was born in the same year as Scott. Broadmeadows, near by, is linked with Scott's ambition to become "laird of the cairn and the scaur." Yarrow Kirk, recently (1906) restored, Scott styled "the shrine of his ancestors." Ashestiel was in the parish, and occasionally he rode across the hills to worship. John Rutherford, his great-grandfather, was minister from 1691 to 1710. Yarrow's Inscribed Stone had no little interest for Scott, who imagined that it bore some relation to the tragedy depicted in the *Dowie Dens* ballad:

> "Late at e'en, drinking the wine,
> And ere they paid the lawing,
> They set a combat them between,
> To fight it in the dawing."

The inscription, however, has been found

ST MARY'S LOCH, ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD,
AND DRYHOPE TOWER

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"The steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude
So stilly is the solitude.
Naught living meets the eye and ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.
. . . . . .
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower."

SCOTT

Tom Scott 1907

to date back to the fifth or sixth century, while the ballad was not unlikely of the seventeenth century, if an extract from the Selkirk Presbytery Records is to be held as chronicling what, at all events, looks like a clue to the "affair." Haunted Yarrow contains Blackhouse also, the locale of *The Douglas Tragedy*; and Dryhope, sacred to the Flower of Yarrow's winsome memory. The Kirk of St Mary, on the heights above St Mary's Loch, has long since vanished (see canto ii. of *The Lay* for an account of its destruction); but on its site the loneliest kirkyard of "the South Countree," scene of the dramatic *dénouement* in *The Gay Goss-Hawk*, may still be visited.

Scott's lines in *The Lay* descriptive of Yarrow's "silent lake," in its marvellous reflections rivalling the Norwegian Suldalsvand, are not quite true to the modern facts. It cannot now be said (except, perhaps, in winter-tide) that

> "Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
> So stilly is the solitude!"

But there is an old-world serenity about Henderland; and at the grave of "Perys of Cokburne and hys wyfe Marjory" not a sound assails the ear save the murmuring of the stream. Meggetdale is a less frequented spot, though hardly less romantic than its more classic neighbour. How few know the superlative beauty of its Dow Glen, where, as Scott tells us, the Lady of that very pathetic plaint, *The Lament of the Border Widow*, strove "to drown, amid the roar of a foaming cataract, the tumultuous noise which announced the close of her husband's existence!" The far-famed hostelry of "Tibbie Shiel's," on the peninsula between St Mary's and the Loch of the Lowes, received many a visit from Scott, whose conception of "a complete day's idleness" meant frequently a drive "up Yarrow" to "Tibbie's," and occasionally further on to Chapelhope or Birkhill, and the Grey Mare's Tail. "We ascended the Birkhill path," he wrote, after one of his visits in 1826, "under the moist and misty influence of the *genius*

loci. Never mind; my companions were merry and I cheerful. Our luncheon eaten in the herd's cottage; but the poor woman saddened me unawares by asking for poor Charlotte, whom she had often seen there with me. She put me in mind that I had come twice over those hills and bogs with a wheeled-carriage before the road, now an excellent one, was made. I knew it was true, but, on my soul, looking where we must have gone, I could hardly believe I had been such a fool." On an earlier date, Skene describes Sir Walter's affection for the locality: "I need not tell you that St Mary's Loch and the Loch of the Lowes were amongst the most favourite scenes of our excursions, as his fondness for them continued to his last days, and we have both visited them many times together." Hogg led Scott's party once or twice, and recalling it afterwards, remarks: "I was disappointed in never seeing one incident in his subsequent works laid in a scene resembling the rugged solitudes around Loch

Skene, for I never saw him survey any with so much attention. A single serious look at a scene generally filled his mind with it, and he seldom took another; but here he took in all the names of the hills, their altitudes, and relative situations with regard to one another, and made me repeat them several times." Nevertheless, in *Old Mortality*, as well as in the Introduction to the second canto of *Marmion*, Scott turned his excursions to excellent account in some of his grandest word-paintings.

CHAPTER VII

THE LAST PHASE

It is pathetic to recall that Scott had practically only one year of unclouded happiness in the completed Abbotsford. The last touches were barely given to the castle of his dreams; the ambition of his life was not at its full flood-mark, when the blow fell which made him one of the most sorely smitten men in history. A *dénouement* more unexpected, more unavoidable, more tragic, it would not be easy to imagine. So far as Scott is concerned, he was clearly blameworthy, and he knew it. He had no conception, however, of the burden that Fate had laid upon him. It is useless attempting to estimate the amount of blame which should be meted out to Scott as against Ballantyne and Constable. All three must be held censurable, though the in-

tegrity of none of them may be impeached for a moment. It was a case of sheer financial blundering. Scott trusted too implicitly to Ballantyne, who was not a very efficient master-printer; and to Constable, who ground his own axe rather too keenly at Scott's expense. At the same time there can be no doubt that Scott used, for Abbotsford, money which should have been put into the printing business. It was this inordinate love of land which lay at the root of the trouble. Lockhart is manifestly unjust to James Ballantyne in saddling him with the chief responsibility for the catastrophe. Scott must have known how things were going, though Lockhart is sure that he did not know. But how can it be explained (even Lockhart himself wonders) that a man so careful about his purely personal expenses, who kept "a day-book and ledger as regularly as any cheesemonger in the Grassmarket," and could have given "the sum-total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through

turnpike gates during a period of thirty years," should have been so loose in his commercial dealings as head of a great printing firm? It is impossible not to have sympathy with Scott, impossible also to exonerate him in the least. Whatever may be said of the affair for one side or the other, the fact remains that Scott was really the architect of his own misfortune.

It was in January 1826 that Hurst, Robinson & Co., the London agents of Constable, collapsed, and with them went down not only Constable and the Ballantynes, but Scott himself. The sum for which he held himself responsible has been put at various figures. The most accurate estimate may be taken to be about £130,000, creditors' claims amounting to £120,000, with a private debt of £10,000, previously raised on Abbotsford in the hope of averting the disaster. For assets, there were Scott's shares in several companies; the Castle Street house, the curios, books, and furniture. Abbotsford, being entailed at

the time of his son's marriage with Miss Jobson, was out of creditors' reach, though at one time Scott feared it would have to go. Notwithstanding the amazingly bold front maintained by Sir Walter in face of such a catastrophe, it is wide of the truth to say that he accepted the situation in a flippant spirit. That is utterly to demean and belittle Scott, who felt his position much more acutely than his conduct perhaps showed at the time.

No reader of the Journal, the commencement of which coincides, curiously, with the crisis, can fail to note the tinge of sadness and melancholy that overshadows the most of it. There, at any rate, Scott's true self is seen. But it was typical of the man to set a stout heart to the stey brae that had suddenly shot up in front of him. We see him at his best now, buckling to the uninviting prospect with a resolution and a strenuousness that have no parallel in literary history. "I feel neither dishonoured nor broken down by the bad, now

really bad, news I have received," we find him writing immediately after the crash. "I will not yield without a fight for it. It is odd, when I set myself to work doggedly, as Dr Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man that I ever was—neither low-spirited nor *distrait*. In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer; the fountain is awakened from its inmost recesses, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage." Scott was nothing if not sanguine. Never, moreover, was man more keenly independent. He was determined, he said many times, "to give every man his own." "If my life is spared nobody will lose a penny by me." "This right hand will work it all off." "Time and I against any two." Scott was the soul of honour all through—in the heyday of his strength, in the hour of his declension. Of this the six years that followed furnish the most striking testimony. He saw that for the

battle to be won meant the making of huge sacrifices. So "dear 39" went, not without a pang. The Abbotsford expenses were reduced to a minimum. And, very different from his usual habit of work, he stuck at his desk all day long on occasion. *Woodstock* was on the "stocks" when the crisis came. This, finished in three months, brought the unprecedented sum of £8228. During the next year his great *Life of Napoleon* ended by bringing double the *Woodstock* figure, by which, with the addition of profits from other sales, he was enabled to clear off no less than £30,000. It was amid all this marvellous energy and success that some of his creditors (chiefly a Jew broker, one Abud) were so merciless in their persecution of him, and he went about, like Burns, in momentary terror of being apprehended and thrust into a debtor's cell. It was, indeed, only the magnanimity of another creditor, Sir William Forbes, which averted the affront; a graceful act on the part of Scott's friend and former

rival. It was in this year, too, that Scott passed through that crowning sorrow possible to man—the loss of his wife. Nevertheless, there was no abatement of zeal. He seemed rather to grow the more anxious and the more absorbed as the days flew past. When one recalls that the output of this period comprises no fewer than forty volumes, besides numerous reviews, and the issue of a collected edition of the novels —the Magnum Opus—furnished with prefaces and notes by his own hand, it seems perfectly marvellous that, despite failing health and other hindering elements, he should have been able to accomplish such an array of work. Of course it was bound to tell in the end. Nor can we doubt that Scott anticipated the evolution of events as they actually emerged. In 1825 we find an entry in the Diary to this effect: "My dear wife, the partner of early cares and successes, is, I fear, frail in health—though I trust and pray she may see me out. Indeed, if this troublesome complaint goes on, it

bodes no long existence. My brother was affected with the same weakness, which, before he was fifty, brought on mortal symptoms. But my father, the most abstemious of men, save when the duties of hospitality required him to be very moderately free with his bottle, and that was very seldom, had the same weakness which now annoys me, and he, I think, was not above seventy when cut off. Square the odds, and good-night, Sir Walter, about sixty. I care not, if I leave my name unstained and my family properly settled. *Sat est vixisse.*"

It was on February 15, 1830, that the blow—long dreaded, long expected—fell: a shock of paralysis, his first real seizure to be sure, but the outcome of a premonitory series of troubles which had been going on for months. On his return from the Court, in his usual health as it seemed, he found an old friend (Miss Young, of Hawick) waiting in his house at 6 Shandwick Place, to consult him about a Memoir of her father, which he had promised to re-

vise for the press. When looking at the manuscript, the stroke came. A slight contortion passed over his features. In a minute or two he rose, staggered to the drawing-room, where Anne Scott and Violet Lockhart met him as he fell insensible on the floor. A surgeon, quickly at hand, cupped him, and in a few hours he was practically himself again; able to speak, and within a day or two to resume his Court duties. There was, however, no mistaking the serious nature of the symptoms; and, as Lockhart says, "considering the terrible violence, and agitation, and exertion to which he had been subjected during the four preceding years, the only wonder is that this blow was deferred so long; there can be none that it was soon followed by others." During 1831 a very great change for the worse took place. "I cannot say the world opens pleasantly for me this New Year," Scott wrote on January 1. "I feel myself decidedly weaker in point of health, and am now confirmed I have had a par-

alytic touch [there had been a second in the preceding November]. I speak and read with embarrassment, and even my handwriting seems to stammer. This general failure

> 'With mortal crisis doth portend
> My days to appropinque an end.'"

Five days later there is this somewhat disconsolate entry: "Very indifferent, with more awkward feelings than I can well bear up against. My voice sunk, and my head strangely confused. When I begin to form my ideas for conversation, expressions fail me." Indeed the Journal turns to be sad reading now, overshadowed as it is by the painful *contres-temps* which were becoming so recurrent. In the course of the year, doctors' treatment yielding no benefit, from his constant determination to be at his desk, it was deemed advisable, as a possible chance of prolonging his life for a little at all events, that he should winter abroad. His son Charles being attached to the British Legation at Naples, Italy was

chosen. Accordingly on September 23 Scott quitted Abbotsford, practically for ever. There is pathos in the recital of farewell visits, and in the final instructions to Laidlaw: "Be very careful about the dogs." James Mathieson, of Hawick (old Peter's grandson), has told how the servants gathered in a body upon the stair-landing to bid their master goodbye, and how Sir Walter, observing the boy of nine among them, patted him kindly on the head, popping a half-crown piece into his hand, and telling him to be a "guid laddie" till he came back. It is refreshing to remark that the Whig Government of the day (Scott was a consummate Tory) placed a fine war-frigate at his disposal—the *Barham*—Captain (afterwards Sir Hugh) Pigott. A month was spent in London before embarking, meeting with old friends—Lady Louisa Stuart, Tom Moore, John Wilson Croker, Sir David Wilkie, and others. On October 29 the party, Scott, his son Walter and wife, his daughter Anne, and the indis-

pensable John Nicolson (Scott's favourite man-servant), sailed from Portsmouth, arriving at Malta after three weeks at sea, which Scott seems to have enjoyed on the whole. When at Valetta he was inspired with the idea of a new novel, to be entitled *The Siege of Malta*,[1] and actually began writing it shortly after reaching Naples. During his stay in that city he nearly finished both this and a shorter romance, *Il Bizarro*, "neither of which will ever, I hope, see the light," says Lockhart. So say all true Scott lovers! For four months—from December 17 to April 15—Sir Walter remained at Naples, residing in the Palazzo Caramanico. The picturesque Bay appealed to him as "one of the finest things I ever saw." Not a little of the scenery he compared to Scotland—to Edinburgh, to the Eildons, to Cauldshiels, and to Abbotsford. A peasant's lilt recalled the melodies of the Border,

[1] Not, as Mr Andrew Lang constantly says, *The Knights of Malta*. Curiously enough, however, a work under that title was published about this same time.

and pathetically he repeated *Jock o' Hazeldean*, and his boyhood's favourite, *Hardyknute*. At another time Highland memories were uppermost, as he hummed:

> "Up the craggy mountain
> And down the mossy glen,
> We canna gang a-milkin'
> For Charlie and his men."

It is doubtful if this Continental tour was any good to Scott at all. He took it grudgingly. A lady (Mrs John Davy) who saw much of him at Malta says he was constantly harking back to Tweedside—"my own Tweedside"—"which, in truth, he seemed to lament ever having quitted." And at Rome we know how all the while his heart was at Abbotsford. In the Casa Bernini, Scott's headquarters, the Italians have shown their appreciation of his sojourn among them and of his distinction as an author, by inserting a tablet under the window of the room he occupied, bearing this inscription, to which, however, Scottish readers will take one exception:

S. P. Q. R.[1]
L'ANNO MDCCCXXXII
VLTIMO DI SVA VITA
QVESTA CASA ABITÓ
L'ILLVSTRE ROMANZIERE INGLESE
WALTER SCOTT
DA EDIMBVRGO
MDCCCLXXXII

Is there in literature anything more touching than the unfinished sentence which closes Scott's Journal, April 16, 1832? "We entered Rome by a gate renovated by one of the old Pontiffs, but which I forget, and so paraded the streets by moonlight to discover, if possible, some appearance of the learned Sir William Gell or the pretty Miss Ashley. At length we found an old servant who guided us to the lodging taken by Sir William Gell, where all was comfortable, a good fire included, which overfatigue and the chilliness of the night re-

[1] "In the year 1832, the last of his life, the illustrious English novelist, Walter Scott, of Edinburgh, lived in this house." The tablet, it may be of interest to note, was unveiled by the Earl of Haddington in 1882.

quired. We dispersed as soon as we had taken some food, wine and water. We slept reasonably, but on the next morning ——" Some interruption must have obliged him to lay aside his beloved "Gurnal"—for ever, as it proved. Its jagged, hardly decipherable character, contrasted with his former clean and clear caligraphy, makes it pitiable in the extreme. What happened next morning? He was in good spirits apparently, and along with Sir William Gell, the great authority on Roman topography, he saw the Stuart monuments in St Peter's and the Villa Muti at Frascati, where Cardinal York had passed his later years. Scott walked with difficulty: "We contrived to tie a glove round the point of his stick, to prevent his slipping in some degree; but to conduct him was really a service of danger and alarm, owing to his infirmity and total want of caution." The glories of the Eternal City and of Italy itself were virtually lost on him. The appearances of brain softening, that pathetic

appendage of prolonged paralysis, had become only too manifest. And what of memory was still operative dwelt longest and fondest on the home-visions. "The sunny plains and deep indigo transparent skies of Italy are all indifferent to the great sick heart of a Sir Walter Scott," wrote Carlyle; "on the back of the Apennines, in wild spring weather, the sight of bleak Scotch firs, and snow-spotted heath and desolation, brings tears into his eyes." When he heard of the death of Goethe (whom he had hoped to visit at Weimar), he exclaimed, "Alas for Goethe! but he at least died at *home*. Let us to Abbotsford." On May 11, Sir Walter left Rome. On the 17th, he passed the Apennines (a small memorial has just been placed on the spot where the party halted). On the 19th, he was at Venice, whose Bridge of Sighs was the sole object that interested him. The homeward journey was continued through the Tyrol, onward by Munich, Ulm, and Heidelberg, to Frankfort and Mayence,

thence down the most picturesque part of the Rhine as far as Cologne. At Mayence, a print of Abbotsford was shown to the unrecognised tourist, who, with a curt "I know that place already, sir," left the shop *sans cérémonie*. At Nimeguen, on June 9, he had another apoplectic attack—the worst. On the 11th, he was carried on board an English steamboat at Rotterdam, and on the 13th he reached London, absolutely exhausted. For three weeks, within the St James's Hotel, Jermyn Street (now No. 76), he lay to all intents dead to the world, with only a very occasional lucid moment. Sir Henry Halford and Dr (afterwards Sir) Henry Holland were invited to assist Dr Fergusson, his customary medical attendant; and all his family, as well as Cadell his publisher, and his old friend John Richardson, visited his bedside. He woke up at the sound of the latter's voice, and made an attempt to put forth his hand. It dropped powerless, and he said, with a smile, "Excuse my hand." Richardson made

a struggle to suppress his emotion, and, after a moment, got out something about Abbotsford and the woods, which he had happened to see shortly before. Scott's eye brightened. "How does Kirklands get on?" he said, referring to Richardson's new estate, near Ancrum, which Scott had left him busied with. His friend told him that his new house was begun, and that the Marquis of Lothian had very kindly lent him one of his own, meantime, in its vicinity. "Ay! Lord Lothian is a good man," said Sir Walter; "he is a man from whom one may receive a favour, and that's saying a good deal for any man in these days." The stupor then sank back upon him, and Richardson never heard his voice again. This state of things continued till the beginning of July, when it was decided to remove him to Scotland. On the 7th, Sir Walter was slung on board the steamer that was to take him home. Two days later the *James Watt* reached Newhaven, and being still, as during all the voyage, in a

comatose condition, he was conveyed to the Douglas Hotel in St Andrew Square (now the offices of the Scottish Union and National Insurance Company), where the last two days in his "own romantic town" were passed. At a very early hour on the 11th, the drive to Abbotsford was begun. During the first part of the journey he remained torpid. At Gala Water the veil lifted somewhat. "Gala Water surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee," he murmured, as the old familiar places burst into view. When he saw the Eildons,

> "Three crests against the saffron sky,"

and came within hearing of

> "The kind remembered melody
> Of Tweed once more again,"

he became greatly excited, and at sight of the Abbotsford towers, visible from above Melrose Bridge, he could scarcely be kept in the carriage. Arrived, he was put to bed in the dining-room, and after a few moments, as if trying to recollect, his eyes

fell on Laidlaw. "Ha! Willie Laidlaw!" he exclaimed, "O man, how often have I thought of *you*!" The next day Lockhart and Laidlaw wheeled him about for a time. Abbotsford was then looking its best, with the rose-beds and gardens in full summer bloom. By and by he asked to be taken through his rooms, and leisurely they moved him for an hour or more up and down the hall and the library, where he kept repeating: "I have seen much, but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more." Next morning he was still better. After again enjoying the Bath chair for perhaps a couple of hours out of doors, he desired to be drawn into the library and placed by the fine central window, that he might look down upon the Tweed. It was then he expressed the wish that Lockhart should read to him. When asked from what book, he answered, "Need you ask? There is but one." "I chose the fourteenth chapter of St John's Gospel," writes his biographer; "he listened with mild de-

votion, and said, when I had done, 'Well, this is a great comfort; I have followed you distinctly, and I feel as if I were yet to be myself again.'" On another occasion he requested to be taken into his study and placed at his desk. When he found himself in the old position, he smiled and said, "Now give me my pen, and leave me for a little to myself." "Sophia," Lockhart goes on to say, "put the pen into his hand, and he endeavoured to close his fingers upon it, but they refused their office—it dropped on the paper. He sank back among his pillows, silent tears rolling down his cheeks; but composing himself by and by, motioned to me to wheel him out of doors again. Laidlaw met us at the porch and took his turn of the chair. Sir Walter after a little while again dropt into slumber. When he was awaking, Laidlaw said to me, 'Sir Walter has had a little repose.' 'No, Willie,' said he, 'no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave.' The tears again rushed from his eyes. 'Friends,' said he, 'don't let

me expose myself; get me to bed, that's the only place.'" After that he scarcely ever left it, although his great strength enabled him to hold out for two months longer. During those last weeks, his mind, wandering mostly, appeared to dwell, with rare exceptions, on serious and solemn things. Sometimes he was the Shirra, administering justice, anon he was giving Tom Purdie orders anent trees. Then he would be heard muttering snatches from Isaiah and Job, from the *Dies Irae* and *Stabat Mater*, or the grand old Scottish Psalm Book. On the 17th September, he had one of his last intervals of consciousness, when he addressed those impressive and stately words to his son-in-law: "Lockhart, I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man, be virtuous, be religious, be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." "He paused," says Lockhart, "and I said, 'Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?' 'No,' said he, 'don't disturb them. Poor souls!

I know they were up all night. God bless you all.' With this he sank into a very tranquil sleep." About half-past one P.M. on September 21 the end came, and Sir Walter Scott breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. "It was a beautiful day, so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes."

He died one month and six days after completing his 61st year. He lived just a year—but a year of gradual dying—beyond his calculation.

On the 26th, Sir Walter was buried at Dryburgh, no resting-place more beautiful, though Melrose were perhaps a more appropriate in Scott's case. But it was his wish—as it was his right—to lie with kindred dust in the ancient sepulchre of the

Haliburtons. So the long procession moved out from Abbotsford on that last of all journeys. The very elements seemed to strive together in sympathy:

"There was wailing on the autumn breeze and darkness in the sky,
When, with sable plume, and cloak, and pall, his funeral train swept by."

Throughout the route—almost a dozen miles—the tokens of public sorrow were abundant. What pathos in that last crossing of the Tweed at Leaderfoot! On the brow of Bemersyde Hill—Scott's favourite view, where he was accustomed to halt his carriage for a little—the cortège paused for a minute or two, accidentally, as Lockhart thinks. Which may be; but when it is recalled that one of the horses in the hearse was Scott's own, and must have borne him hither many a time, the explanation is easy. At about half-past five the Abbey precincts were entered, when Peter Mathieson—frail now—with Laidlaw and others of the Abbotsford servants, past

DRYBURGH ABBEY

From a water-colour drawing by
TOM SCOTT, R.S.A.

"We have nothing left of Dryburgh, although my father's maternal inheritance, but the right of stretching our bones where mine may perhaps be laid ere any eye but my own glances over these pages."

SCOTT.

Tom Scott. 1907

and present, carried the plain black coffin to the red earth prepared for it within St Mary's Aisle. The pall-bearers were his two sons, his son-in-law, and six other relatives, the Rev. John Williams (who had been tutor to Charles Scott) reciting the solemn, but comforting and reassuring, words of the English burial-service. With Sir Walter at Dryburgh sleep his wife and the eldest son, who was as the very apple of his eyes, and his wife, and "at the feet" of the King of the Romantics ("where he longed to be") John Gibson Lockhart, his "biographer and friend"—one of the purest, most gentle, most misunderstood souls this world has seen, through whose genius posterity has learned to know and to love another no less pure, no less good.

When Scott died, the hard-won victory was in sight. At 1832 the debt had been diminished by £66,000 — an average of £11,000 a year. Against the remainder a sum of £22,000 was received from his life insurance, and a generous advance from

Cadell (Constable's son-in-law, and latterly Scott's publisher) enabled his executors to settle in full with the Ballantyne creditors. By 1847 the loan was reduced to one-half, and the mortgage on Abbotsford to £8500. On May 11, 1847, Lockhart writes:—"I have finally settled all our Sir Walter's affairs. There remained debt on the lands £8500, to Cadell £16,000, and sundries £1000. I have taken the £1000 on myself, and Cadell obliterates the £24,500 on condition of getting the whole remaining copyright of Scott's works, and also of the Life." Had Scott lived, he would himself have paid off—and soon—every farthing of debt. As it is, it was really his own hand which "worked it off," in that almost superhuman effort which cost him his life, but has rendered his name unstained and honourable for ever. There are none to whom the words of Sir William Stirling Maxwell will not come with a deep personal appeal: "I never take down a volume of Scott's writings published in or after 1826 without thinking

of the circumstances in which they were composed, and remembering that they, like the water from the well of Bethlehem which David refused to drink, represent the heart's blood of a brave man's life."

CHAPTER VIII

SCOTT TO-DAY

WHAT of Walter Scott to-day? Stands Scott where he did? In other words, does he continue to keep his place as "out and away the King of the Romantics?"—to use the happy phrase of Robert Louis Stevenson, Scott's twin-brother in the art of fiction-making. Is Scott read as much as he was? Or is it true, as has been stated, that the Scott vogue has come to its decline? At once we answer emphatically: Scott *is* read as much as ever. In the output of Scott literature there is no diminution; and lovers of Scott are still in the ascendant. A few London librarians have maintained to the contrary, but London does not exhaust the scope of evidence. For even London is hardly the hub of the Scott-reading world. A plebiscite (were that possible)

of the English-speaking countries would reveal an altogether different state of affairs. At home, there is not the slightest doubt that Scott is read more than ever, notwithstanding the enormous increase both in the writing and reading of fiction. The libraries are not nowadays a true test in this matter. In Canada and the United States, however, the present writer (interviewing the keepers of some of the great libraries) found that almost without exception Scott heads their lists of fiction. The same thing holds good in Australia and New Zealand. And in the purely rural libraries of Scotland, Scott has easily the premier place. In the writer's own district a small library was begun a few years since, when on the opening night no fewer than seven of the Waverleys were called for, the very first volume to be taken out being the *Tales of a Grandfather*. This, too, in a parish with a population of only 200, and where novel-reading has been under prejudice for years!

But is not the best answer to be found in the extraordinary creativeness of the press in the shape of Scott literature generally? Take the novels themselves. Never, not even in Scott's time, were there so many of the Waverleys in circulation. Edition after edition has been poured forth in a continuous stream year after year, and the cry is "still they come." Messrs A. & C. Black, of London, the well-known publishers of Scott's works (who possess the author's original of the Magnum Opus, from which all their copies are printed), have issued no fewer than fourteen different editions of the novels; and other publishers (notably Mr Dent), if not so prolific, have done much to popularise Scott still more by means of the surprisingly cheap issues now on the market. That one may purchase any of Scott's works for a shilling, in binding and type that nobody needs to be ashamed of, is one of the marvels of this age of marvels. For a sixpence, even the very poorest may be the pos-

sessor of his own Scott, in perfectly readable and acceptable reprints, albeit paper-covered. It is just here, indeed, that the library argument breaks down. For one who borrows Scott from the libraries, at least a score buy him at the booksellers'. With most circulating libraries, modern fiction (the six-shilling novel) is the principal item. But Scott, having long passed the six-shilling stage, takes his place as a perennial favourite among books that are the companions of the people.

There is to be remarked, too, the unwonted popularity of Scott as a school classic. It is an agreeable feature of the times to find the Waverleys so much in use in the common day-schools of our own country, as well as throughout Canada (where the practice has been in operation for years) and in Australia. In the United States the most ordinary schoolboy will pass a wonderfully searching examination on the whole subject of Scott.

How many publications specially associ-

ated with Scott have been given to the world within recent years! Of fresh Lives of Scott, for instance, two of the best—Mr Lang's and Mr Norgate's—have appeared within a twelvemonth, and of other Scott volumes more than a dozen have been presented to the public within that same period—among them being Mrs Hughes's *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott*; *Letters by Members of Scott's Family to their Old Governess*, edited by the Warden of Wadham College, Oxford; Fyfe's *Edinburgh under Sir Walter Scott*; and *The Waverley Novels*, by Charles Alexander Young—a singularly able piece of criticism. How many articles in the journals of the day are devoted both to Scott himself and to topics which his name suggests! How many references in the daily newspapers to surviving associations and living links with Scott!

The increasing number of Scott Clubs all over the world is not without its own evidence that the spell of the Magician remains unbroken.

It may be said that in all this there is no concrete proof. Though Scott has not escaped the statistical juggler, it is difficult —hopeless indeed—to tabulate the number of volumes which have been in the market. In the first twenty-five years after Scott's death these were sold to the startling figure of 7,967,369. In the half-century that has since passed, it is not too much to say that the output from all sources must have been fully double that quantity. Then, there was only one firm handling Scott's works; to-day there are many firms. Messrs Black send the following, which seems to sum up the situation: "According to our printing accounts the sale of Scott's novels increases year by year, and during the last five years this increase has been specially notable. The Poems, we should say, are not so much read by the public, though they are used to a considerable extent as school-readers. The circulation of the Life is small, but it is to be noted that three other publishers have recently

issued editions. It is perhaps also worthy of note that Mr S. R. Crockett's *Red Cap Tales: Stolen from the Treasure Chest of the Wizard of the North* was a great success, and the author is engaged on a second volume."

One regrets that there should be such a falling off so far as Lockhart's masterpiece is concerned. But the work is really too cumbrous for ordinary purposes, though, of course, the true Scott enthusiast wants to read every word about his hero. At the same time it seems a pity that such a notable biography—the noblest in the language, Mr Saintsbury thinks, with all deference to Boswell—should remain so much unread. What is needed to create fresh interest in the work is an up-to-date annotated edition, such as will give to Lockhart a new lease of life, and secure for Scott (if that be possible) a deeper meed of affection from his countrymen all over the globe; and from generous hearts everywhere, who have long claimed "the good

Sir Walter" as their own. Meantime, Scott keeps his pedestal, and the day of his dethronement no one dreams of seeing.

The centuries to come are not likely to see any more potent figure in the realm of romantic literature. With Shakespeare and Burns, Scott's place is surely among the unapproachables—a Mont Blanc in his own sphere. To him there has come no real successor. Stevenson, to be sure, is a more consummate artist, a more skilful manipulator of words. But it is the story no less than the "play" that touches the hearts of the people. Here Scott reigns supreme. For one who understands and appreciates style, there are ninety-nine who do not, but are yet led captive by a well-told tale. And all understand Scott. He has something for all; and none can read him without betterment.

Scott's gospel was to make men happy; and who, in his particular fashion, ever did so much in that direction? If Literature had no object, as Carlyle suggests, but that

of harmless amusement, then here was the perfection of Literature: "here, more emphatically than ever elsewhere, might a man fling himself back, exclaiming, 'Be mine to lie on this sofa and read everlasting Novels of Walter Scott.'" But there is more than amusement to be derived from these entrancing romances. They stimulate; they instruct; they soothe; and because of their strong creative sympathies, they are not least among life's sweeteners. Hence, to hint at the decline of Scott would be to predict the degeneracy of man: to imagine a time when man should have no eye for the beautiful things around him; no heart for the joys and the sorrows of the race; no soul to despise things that were mean, or uphold things that were noble.

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